

Rabbani forces advance against Taliban militia

KABUL (Agencies) — Afghan government forces have driven Taliban fighters from part of the town of Girishk, 110 kilometres from the main Taliban stronghold of Kandahar in southern Afghanistan, a spokesman said.

President Borhanuddin Rabbani's defence spokesman, known as Dr. Abdullah, said government troops had pushed into Girishk, in Helmand province, on Saturday. He had no word on casualties.

Independent sources on Kandahar confirmed that part of Girishk had fallen to pro-Rabbani forces.

Dr. Abdullah told reporters government troops would attack Kandahar once Girishk was fully under their control.

"When we start to attack Kandahar we think there will be an internal uprising in support of the government," he said.

Pro-Rabbani forces launched an offensive against the Taliban on Wednesday with an attack on the town of Delaram, 270 kilometres south of the government-held city of Herat, ending a two-month-old unofficial ceasefire.

Since then they have pushed the Taliban 120 kilometres to Girishk on the border between Helmand and Kandahar provinces.

The Taliban emerged from obscurity 10 months ago, capturing Kandahar from discredited guerrilla warlords and advancing through several provinces to threaten Kabul.

The militia, led by Islamic religious students, was pushed back from the capital by government forces in March.

The Taliban have been holding seven Russian airmen in Kandahar since August 3 when a Taliban MiG fighter forced their ammunition-laden Ilyushin-76 cargo plane to land there.

A Russian delegation visited Kandahar on Saturday, but failed to win the captives' release, Russia's ITAR-TASS news agency reported on Sunday.

It quoted a member of the delegation as saying that Taliban leaders had demanded that an international conference be held in Kandahar attended by representatives from the United Nations, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and Russia.

The rebels also demanded that Russia should undertake not to interfere in Afghanistan's internal affairs, the agency said.

Earlier, the Taliban had demanded a list of 60,000 Afghans alleged to have been deported to the former Soviet Union during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980s. Moscow has denied that it holds any Afghan prisoners.

While Mr. Rabbani's forces firmly control the Afghan capital, the countryside is controlled by rival warlords.

Mr. Rabbani controls roughly one-third of Afghanistan with the remaining two-thirds of Afghanistan divided among at least eight different groups.

It is estimated that at least 25,000 people, most of them civilians, have been killed in bitter factional fighting since Muslim insurgents threw out the communists from power in April 1992.

Talibans demand meeting

The Taliban have demanded that a conference with U.N. participation be held in southern Afghanistan to discuss the fate of seven Russian airmen it holds hostage in Kandahar, a Russian diplomat said on Sunday.

The militia also wants Russian assurances it will not interfere in internal Afghan affairs, said Zamil Kabolov, a counsellor at the Russian embassy in Islamabad.

Sepakio by telephone from Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates, he said he had failed to win the release of the seven men who have been held since Aug. 3 when the Taliban militia forced their Ilyushin-76 cargo plane carrying ammunition to land.

Trans Avia, an air company staffed mainly by Russians and which arranged the chartering of the Tatarstan-based Aerostan plane by the Afghan government, is based in Sharjah.

"They (Talibans) want us to organise some international conference in Kandahar... (attended by) a U.N. representative — maybe Mr. Mesut, someone from the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, plus me, plus a Tatarstan delegate," Mr. Kabolov said.

Harry Wu criticises Israel for military relations with China

TEL AVIV (AP) — Harry Wu, the human rights activist released from Chinese detention, criticised Israel on Sunday for its military cooperation with Beijing and called on the government to stop "dealing with evil."

Interviewed on Israel Radio, Mr. Wu said Israel had made "a very, very bad decision" and should withhold support because the Chinese government was putting people in concentration camps just like the Nazis did.

"If the Israeli people are really concerned about concentration camps, they have to apply the same principle to China," said Mr. Wu, speaking from his home in Milpitas, California.

"Of course, Israel has its own problem with Iran, Iraq and Syria. But if you are dealing with an evil how can you need another evil to support you?" said Mr. Wu, returned to the United States over the weekend.

"This is very terrible. I know that Israeli military experts are right now in China working very hard with Chinese military," he added.

Reacting to Mr. Wu's accusations, a Foreign Ministry official said: "Israel is not really the main support of China in any sense, so I am surprised at his attack. It's not like the Chinese regime is depending on Israel and would crumble if it withdrew its support."

Israeli officials have refused to comment on persistent foreign reports that Israel is selling weapons and military technology to China, including the upgrade of Chinese tanks.

Israel and China established diplomatic relations in 1992, and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who is also the defence minister, and the army chief of staff have visited Beijing.

Mr. Wu, 58, was arrested June 19 while trying to enter China at a remote border crossing and later sentenced to 15 years in prison and expulsion on charges of espionage. It was his fifth trip there since 1991 to document human rights abuses in the country's extensive prison labour camps.

Slapstick play offers rare laugh in Baghdad

BAGHDAD (AP) — The hottest play in Baghdad is a slapstick comedy that opens in a bustling market with a young Iraqi exulting over his fake visa to Britain.

"This looks so good the British will never notice the difference," boasts the man as he discusses departure plans with friends in the Maradee market.

And so the audience is introduced to a tour of street life in Baghdad, where the young men of the market mock each other relentlessly, bemoan the country's problems, and imagine what life would be like in London.

"From Maradee to London" has been filling the 800 seats at the Two Rivers theatre for two years with fast-paced humour that offers the crowd a rare chance to laugh, savour an evening out, and escape Iraq's daily hardships.

Baghdad used to be one of the most vibrant and liberal capitals in the Arab World, flush with theatres, nightclubs and good restaurants where the staff did not blink if diners strolled in past midnight.

But the Gulf war and the mounting economic hardships, compounded by international sanctions, has left Baghdad decidedly dull.

The upscale restaurants are now empty. President Saddam Hussein banned alcohol in nightclubs as part of an official policy that now frowns on displays of lavish living.

That leaves little public entertainment besides the city's eight theatres, where tickets cost 200 dinars (33 cents).

In a country where dissent is not tolerated, the popular, topical play is perhaps as good a barometer as any for measuring public opinion.

"We want a theatre that can paint a smile on people's faces," said the play's director, Kassar Al Sarig, an energetic man with tousled black hair. "But this is also a serious play because it talks about the difficult circumstances today in Iraq. I think that's why it succeeds."

Iraqi artists can make generic criticisms of some problems, such as runaway inflation, which is blamed on the sanctions. But sensitive subjects are taboo, such as President Saddam and everything he loves.

Mr. Sarig had one play shut by the government because it criticised school teachers.

He remains unfazed, saying his next play will be entitled, "The Minister's Party," and will focus on official corruption.

His current play is tame in political terms, but it shows the modern, secular side of Baghdad that is often overlooked amid its problems with the United States and other Western countries.

The young men of the market dress in blue jeans and greet each other by slapping high-fives. The women flirt, shake their hips when they walk and speak in double entendres.

The market gossip moves from the poor quality of government-rationed flour to the merits of leaving Iraq for the West.

"The people of London have never loved an Arab and they never will," one middle-aged man tells his nephew, an artist determined to seek his fortune abroad.

The slapstick gives the play mass appeal and draws an audience made up mostly of families. Children break into laughter as the rotund man who sells water is insulted time and again, then chased down a nemesis half his size.

The characters magically appear in London in the second act, and complications ensue.

One Iraqi explains that he was detained by airport police after they asked if he had any explosives. He answered with the only English word he knew: "Yes."

The men discover whiskey, which they like all too well. They are shocked — and intrigued — when they see men and women touch in public. In a jolt at the rich Arabs of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, the poor Iraqis ask a wealthy sheikh for a loan, only to be rejected.

In the end, they decide it is best to head back to Iraq. "A drop of water in Iraq is worth a mountain of gold in a foreign land," says one character.

A simple message, perhaps, but the audience approves with a standing ovation.

Iran accuses Europeans of not helping it in drug war

NICOSIA (AP) — A leader of Iran's anti-narcotics campaign was quoted Sunday as criticising European countries for not helping that campaign, which he claimed was intercepting large amounts of drugs destined for those states.

Instead, noted Mohammad Fallah, European authorities "have adopted a hostile attitude and exert political pressure on us," he was quoted as saying in Sunday's edition of the English-language Tehran daily, Iran News.

"Iran is playing a crucial role in blocking the flow of drugs to Europe," said Mr. Fallah, secretary of the national anti-drug campaign.

"Last year we confiscated 25 tonnes of morphine destined for that continent, but we expect the Europeans to cooperate with us."

Despite the lack of cooperation, he said, Iran will follow the teachings of the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, "who said that 'the salvation of one addict is the salvation of mankind'."

He vowed that Iran's anti-narcotics offensive, launched in December 1988, will continue, noting "this is a complicated and sensitive task and is best carried out with multi-national cooperation."

Mr. Fallah said that Iran currently has an estimated 500,000 drug addicts, compared to two million before the crackdown was launched.

Diplomats in 1988 estimated that the number of addicts was far higher than two million, but there are no official estimates for how many there may be now.

Over the last eight years, Iranian authorities have arrested thousands of narcotics smugglers and dealers, executing more than 1,000 in public hangings. Several hundred security personnel have been killed in gunbattles with armed bands of smugglers.

Hundreds of thousands of addicts have been rounded up and thrown into special harsh-regime rehabilitation camps.

Thousands of tonnes of heroin, opium, morphine and other narcotics, much of it from neighbouring Afghanistan and Pakistan, have been seized, according to Iranian authorities.

Last year, the U.S. State Department accused Iran of allowing its territory to be used as a "major point" of transit for South Asian heroin destined for the United States and Europe.

Iran denied that and U.N. drug control officials conceded that the Islamic republic was making a determined effort to halt the flood of drugs through its territory.

Mr. Fallah said Iran was also trying to stop drug trafficking by buying wheat at high prices from farmers in Afghanistan to encourage them to grow the crop instead of opium.

Mr. Fallah said farmers in Afghanistan produced 5,000 tonnes of opium annually.

A United Nations Drug Control Programme survey says Afghanistan produces more opium than any other country, much of it in remote tribal regions close to the border with Iran.

Mr. Fallah said Iran's President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani "made public a sweeping plan through which he offered attractive and useful incentives to the Afghan farmers for substitute farming."

"As an incentive to Afghan farmers to produce wheat instead of opium... Rafsanjani has offered to purchase wheat from Afghan farmers... at triple the price paid to Iranian wheat farmers."

"Actually, the plan is currently being implemented in Afghanistan's heart province..." Mr. Fallah said in the interview.

Announcement

Entries for the Theory Examination of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music will be accepted until Thursday 31 August 1995. The Theory examination will be held on Saturday, November 4, 1995.

For registration and further information please contact the local representative:

The National Music Conservatory / Noor Al Hussein Foundation
Jabel Amman, Atiyat Building - Behind the Embassy of Kuwait
P.O. Box 926687, Amman / Jordan
Tel. 687620, Fax 687621

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Bus ride in Israel becomes a paranoid trip

Agence France Presse

TEL AVIV — After seven militant attacks on buses in 16 months, causing 73 dead and hundreds injured, fewer Israelis are mustering the courage to take public transportation.

Those who have no choice but to take the bus find the trip filled with anxiety and paranoid stares.

Carrying sacks full of groceries, Mansur Simantov silently takes his seat on bus number six in Jerusalem. The other passengers cast a suspicious eye at the 70-year-old retiree.

"It's always the same thing after an attack. My sacks cause panic on the bus. People think my potatoes are bombs," he said.

Every trip provokes fear, says Michele Lindenman, 57, who takes the bus almost daily to a jewellery store where she is a saleswoman. "I'm playing cat-and-mouse with death," she said.

Ms. Lindenman changes lines frequently or quickly gets off a bus if there is a face she does not recognise.

The national bus cooperative Egged said its passenger load has fallen 20 per cent since April 6, 1994. That was the day a Palestinian suicide bomber rammed a car full of explosives into a bus in the northern town of Afula, killing eight Israelis.

The last attack, on Aug. 21 in occupied Jerusalem, killed four passengers when a Palestinian militant opposed to peace with Israel hied himself up on board line 26.

The latest bombing prompted the United States to warn its citizens on Friday to avoid using public transportation, especially buses and bus stops, in Israel and Gaza.

According to a poll taken by the Maariv daily newspaper after the attack, 29 per cent of Israelis interviewed said they were trying to avoid taking the bus, 52 per cent said they would continue to do so and 19 per cent said they never took the bus.

The repeated attacks have caused a heightened sense of panic, according to Guiora Keinan, a psychologist at Tel Aviv University.

He said he has treated numerous people suffering from "bus phobia" over the last few months. For example, one individual walks 10 kilometres (six miles) to work and back since a bus attack in Tel Aviv in October 1994 that left 22 dead.

"Some have become unable to look at a bus, even in films, or come near them," Mr. Keinan said.

"It's a natural and human fear, and bringing it out helps to overcome it," he added.

Dozens of worried bus passengers filed behind a coffin Friday in Jerusalem to protest against Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, who have continued talks with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) despite the wave of attacks.

"Rabin-Peres, take a bus, like the rest of us," one of their signs read.

The bombings have been claimed by Palestinian militant groups, such as the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas, that are trying to derail an Israeli-PLO accord to fully establish Palestinian self-rule in Jericho, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

In an attempt to calm the bus passengers, authorities announced that 100 specially trained guards would be placed on buses considered to be at "high risk." Dogs will also be deployed to sniff out explosives. The measures may be small given the 2,000 buses that circulate in Israel daily.

The bombings have sparked a fiery debate in Israel about how much force to use in the interrogation of Palestinian suspects, especially after the August 21 attack had been in Israeli police custody only two days earlier.

Shin Beth, the security agency, has been under orders since 1987 to use only moderate force, although since the end of 1994 the government has allowed it to take liberties if it suspects an attack is imminent.

There has been political pressure to soften interrogation techniques after a Palestinian died while in custody earlier this year.

But it was only with the use of tougher techniques that the service was able to get one of its prisoners to reveal the identities of the two Palestinians who organised the August 21 suicide bombing, police officials said.

Menahem Schwartz, a bus driver on line six, is fatalistic about efforts to stop the suicide attacks.

"In any case, there is nothing that can be done," he said. "Who knows if that young person sitting gently on the bench is not a crazy person that will transform my bus into a torn up mess of metal."

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 77311-19

PROGRAMME TWO

16:00 Animals of Farthing Wood
16:30 Hey Day
16:50 Survival
17:00 Families
17:00 Children's programme — Rahan
17:30 Orana — Le Monde Ou Science
19:00 News in French
19:15 French Varieties
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 Camp Wilder
20:00 Michele's News
20:30 The Bold and the Beautiful
21:15 Hearts of the West
22:00 News in English
22:25 The Ruth Rendell's Mysteries
23:25 Film: "Marnie"

PRAYER TIMES

04:42 Fajr
16:03 (Sunrise) Dhuhr
12:37 Dhuhur
16:14 'Asr
19:11 Maghrib
20:32 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweetfield, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 633440

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN: Dr. Mukhlis Mazharreh 820425
Dr. Khalid M'adi 743500
Dr. Nasser Ibrahim 743500
Dr. Salim Daboubi 696028
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdous pharmacy 776336
Al Asma pharmacy 623672
Nairokh pharmacy 623670
Al Salam pharmacy 623670
Yacoub pharmacy 649495
Sanaat pharmacy 657660
Nairokh pharmacy 623672
Najib pharmacy 847632

readings: Amman 24 per cent, Aqaba 30 per cent.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Hot weather conditions will prevail with winds easterly light to moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly active and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp. 21/36
Aqaba 27/40
Dorsets 19/38
Jordan Valley 25/41

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 36, Aqaba 40 Humidity

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ)

Flights (Terminal 1)

06:40 Beirut (RJ)
06:50 Riyadh (add) (RJ)
12:15 Milan (RJ)
12:30 Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)
12:40 Bangkok (add) (RJ)
12:50 Cairo (RJ)
13:25 London (RJ)
13:30 Frankfurt (RJ)
13:40 Madrid (add) (RJ)
21:00 Amsterdam, Montreal (add) (RJ)
21:30 Doha (add) (RJ)
22:00 Dubai (add) (RJ)
22:00 Abu Dhabi (add) (RJ)
22:15 Muscat (add) (RJ)
22:15 Dubai, Muscat (RJ)
22:30 'Al Ain, Abu Dhabi (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

06:40 Istanbul (TK)
06:50 London (KZ)
07:30 Rome (AZ)
08:45 Beirut (ME)
12:00 Khartoum (SD)
14:30 Doha (GF)
15:30 Bahrain, Abu Dhabi, Muscat (GF)
15:30 Kiev (6U)
21:25 Cairo (MS)
21:40 Dubai (EK)
21:40 Amsterdam (KL)
21:40 Beirut (ME)
21:40 London (BA)
01:25 Amsterdam (KL)

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ)

Flights (Terminal 1)

06:40 Sanaa (RJ)
06:50 Damascus (RJ)
06:50 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
06:50 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:30 Beirut (RJ)
12:10 New Delhi (RJ)
12:10 Riyadh (add) (RJ)
12:15 Cairo (RJ)
17:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
19:00 Bangkok (RJ)
19:10 Casablanca, Tunis (RJ)
21:45 Milan (RJ)
21:45 Abu Dhabi (add) (RJ)
21:45 Dubai (add) (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

16:50 Khartoum (SD)
13:40 Doha (GF)
14:30 Muscat, Abu Dhabi (GF)
14:30 Kiev (6U)
18:45 Paris, Damascus (AF)
20:25 Cairo (MS)
21:40 Dubai (EK)
21:40 Beirut (ME)
21:40 London (BA)
01:25 Amsterdam (KL)

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08) 53200-5, where it should always be verified.

HOSPITALS

AMMAN: Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalid Maternity, J. Amn 644281/6
Aklich Maternity, J. Amn 642441/2

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111

Prime minister calls for establishing official administrative training units

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker Sunday issued a communique to all government departments with instructions for the creation of units for the administrative development and training of civil servants.

These administrative and training units are to conduct studies and surveys on identifying department needs, establishing plans and programmes for training employees and supervising the implementation of these

programmes, the communique stated.

The creation of these units are needed for the implementation of his Majesty King Hussein's directives to the government to help develop public administration services and functions, the Prime Minister was quoted as saying in his circular.

The communique followed a cabinet meeting which endorsed a system through which some of the Prime Minister's authorities would

be referred to ministers, especially in matters related to the transfer of employees to other departments, seconding employees to work abroad, and sending employees on scholarships and training courses.

In another statement following the cabinet meeting, the government endorsed an allowance to dentists employed by the Health Ministry at the rate of 100 per cent of their basic salaries.

The cabinet also formed two Jordanian delegations. One delegation to the Arab League's council meeting in Cairo to be held on Sept 20 will be headed by Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti. The other delegation for a meeting by the Arab Social and Economic Council in Cairo on Sept 8 will be headed by Dr. Mohammad Bani Hani, assistant secretary-general of the Ministry of Industry and Trade.

Israeli embassy says no change in visa regulations for Jordanians

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Israeli embassy here on Sunday denied that it had changed regulations concerning the issuance of visas to stem what reports in the Israeli and Palestinian press have described as a flow of Jordanians to the Jewish state in search of work.

"There has been no change in the regulations since we started issuing visas on Aug. 1," said a spokesman for the embassy.

"We issue visas to groups for tourism purposes as well as for businessmen and people who wish to visit Israel for professional reasons, such as journalists," the spokesman told the Jordan Times.

The embassy also issues visas for "emergency purposes" in the event of a death in the family or for pressing medical treatment at Israeli hospitals, the spokesman added.

The denial came amid reports carried by Israeli and Palestinian newspapers that as many as 3,000 Jordanian passport holders were staying in Israel or in the occupied territories although their visas had expired.

The Hebrew-language Ma'ariv daily said 11,300 Jordanians had crossed the border in May and June but only 9,300 had returned to Jordan.

Other newspapers, including Israel's Yediot Aharnot as well as two Palestinian dailies, reported in the past months that dozens of Jordanians were expelled across the border after they were found to have overstayed their visas.

Jordanian officials have denied the reports. The Ministry of Labour also rejected reports that Jordanians were seeking jobs in Israel and that Israel had approached the Jordanian government with a request for Jordanian workers.

According to Ma'ariv, the Israeli ministry of interior is now allowing the issuance of only one-month visas for Jordanian tourists to Israel. Previously the period of stay was three months.

However, the embassy spokesman here said the period of stay was decided on the basis of the time Jordanians intended to remain in Israel as part of tour groups.

"They have to go in a group and return in the same group," said the spokesman.

Asked about the reported overstays, the spokesman said he had also heard of the reports, but that the embassy had no specific figures or details of the affair.

The spokesman noted that although

the embassy was opened in December, nearly two months after the signing of the Oct. 26 Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty, the mission did not start issuing visas until August.

In the meantime, it helped facilitate the issuance of visas and entry permits by the Israeli ministry of interior for businessmen, professionals and "emergency" visitors.

According to community sources, many of the Jordanian visitors to Israel are of Palestinian origin with families and relatives in the occupied West Bank, and, in the face of an Israeli refusal to grant them residence permits in the occupied territory, they opt to stay on despite the expiry of the visa.

"However, it is unlikely that they are in the thousands," said one source. "First of all, Israel does not issue visas easily to people of Palestinian origin. Every application filed from Amman (before the embassy started issuing visas) used to be thoroughly checked and the applicant was closely screened."

"Israelis would not admit it, but this used to be the case," added the source. As such, he said, not many Jordanians of Palestinian origin could have made their way to the West Bank and decided to stay on there.

Jordan's position in Beijing to be based on Islamic faith, Arab traditions, says Princess Basma

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan's position at the World Conference on Women, opening in Beijing Sept. 4, is based on Islamic faith and Arab traditions of defining the family as the basic unit of society, and as provided for in the National Strategy on Women, the Jordanian Constitution, and the National Charter, Her Royal Highness Princess Basma said Sunday.

Addressing a press conference at the Queen Alia Fund for Social Development (QAF), the Princess said that the Jordanian delegation, comprising government and non-governmental organisations, agree on two important issues: active participation in all conference activities and the coordination of positions with other Arab and Islamic delegations at the conference.

Princess Basma, who is leading the Jordanian delegation to Beijing, said that the delegation will re-affirm Jordan's absolute commitment to all international resolutions and covenants on women.

She said that Jordan's position at the conference conforms with all headlines contained within the international draft document prepared by the United Nations, and in particular supports



Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Sunday addresses a press conference at Queen Alia Fund premises to announce Jordan's position regarding issues to be discussed at the U.N. conference on women in Beijing (Reuters photo)

the clause that underlines the need for equality between men and women.

In her press conference convened to expound Jordan's position in Beijing, the

Princess stressed that the Kingdom is aware of and deeply concerned over the question of poverty which, she said, has direct negative effects on women.

This awareness motivates Jordan to call for cooperation between rich and poor countries to ensure investments that create jobs, and curtail unemployment and poverty, the Princess said.

The Princess also said that she will speak on the Kingdom's drive to offer equal and non-discriminatory opportunities to men and women and its efforts to eradicate illiteracy.

The delegation will outline the Kingdom's endeavours and achievements in providing health services, spreading public health awareness, and establishing primary care and mother and child health services.

The Princess said that the delegation will stress the rights of women in decision-making at all levels, in the contribution through peaceful means to the settlement of disputes, in ending racial discrimination and in ensuring women's rights to equal pay and treatment in all occupations.

U.S. academic discusses UJ department organisation

AMMAN (J.T.) — Executive Vice-President of Texas Tech-

University (TTU) Ronald Haragan, Sunday ended a week-long visit to the University of Jordan (UJ) to offer suggestions and recommendations on the reformation of academic disciplines and departments.

Paying the visit at the request of UJ Vice-President for Academic Affairs Mohammad Maqusi, Dr. Haragan discussed the organisation of university departments and disciplines.

UJ President Fawzi Gharibeh also attended the meetings.

Dr. Haragan said that the reformation process is required at UJ in order to increase the quality of academic programmes and at the same time to increase the operative efficiency of these programmes, especially in the face of UJ's declining resources and facilities.

Petra gets specialised cleaning services

Standards of hygiene imperative with influx of tourists

By Ghalia Alul
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A private company will carry out cleaning works at the Nabatean city of Petra, at the beginning of September, this year, a Ministry of Tourism official said Sunday.

The official told the Jordan Times that the local company, MEDCO, has won a bid to maintain the cleanliness of the red rose city of Petra and adjacent facilities, which include the service and guest centres.

Specialised cleaning services became imperative in light of the increased volume of tourists visiting Jordan's world-famous ancient city about 290 kilometres south of Amman, the official said.

Established norms and procedures will be followed to supervise the company's work and ensure that it is

keeping the city, famous for its treasury carved in the rock, clean for visitors, said the official.

Petra, the mainstay of Jordan's tourism industry, attracts thousands of Jordanian visitors and foreign tourists throughout the year.

The number of tourists visiting Petra has substantially increased since the signing of the peace treaty with Israel last year.

This sudden upsurge in the number of visitors has put more pressure on the city's touristic sites and facilities, necessitating their improvement and expansion.

The private sector, with an eye on the high return expected on investment in the tourism sector, is committing millions of dinars to the industry.

Jordan is pinning strong hopes on the growth of the tourism sector, which in

1994 contributed \$60 million to the treasury and is expected to earn even more this year.

About 446,000 tourists visited Jordan in the first half of 1995 compared to 317,000 who came to the Kingdom in the same period during 1994.

The ministry official said that if the assessment of the Petra project, which will be paid for from the ministry's budget, is positive, similar cleaning services will be applied in other touristic sites in the Kingdom, such as the Roman city of Jerash, and Wadi Rum.

Many complaints have been made about the lack of cleanliness at Petra and other touristic attractions in Jordan.

The Kingdom is endowed with some 600 archaeological sites that attract tourists from the Arab World, Europe, the United States and, recently, Israel.

WHAT'S GOING ON

DARAT AL FUNUN
SUMMER '95 EXHIBITIONS

* 3-D experiments in calligraphy
by Usama Khalidi.

EXHIBITIONS

* Works of graphic art by several artists.

* Photography show "Elements in Harmony" by Hala Hodeib.

* Display of painted stone and steel, "Embargo Art" by Iraqi artist Nuha Al Radi.

* "Early Morning Scribbles" by Lebanese artist Amin Al Basha and Jordanian artist Rajwa Bint Ali and "Late Night Scribbles" by Amin Al Basha and artist Ali Bermamet.

* Sculpture by Rajwa Bint Ali.

* Abstract art by the late artist Adnan Hilu at the Royal Cultural Centre.
* Oil paintings by Yassin Al Mohammadawi at Baladna Art Gallery.
* Paintings by "Pioneers of the Fifties" Isma'il and Suzanne Al Sheikhly, Khalid Qassab, and Dr. Nuri Behjet at Orfali Art Gallery, Um Utheina.

Parliamentarians head for New York

Amman (Petra) — A parliamentary delegation headed by Senator Leila Sharaf Sunday left for New York to take part in the extraordinary session of the International Parliamentary Union (IPU), which will be held there on Aug. 30.

Heatwave to continue until Monday

Amman (Petra) — The heat wave currently affecting the country will continue until Monday, according to Meteorology Department sources. The sources said temperatures today will reach 36 degrees Celsius in Amman.

Jordan, Syria discuss trade relations

Damascus (Petra) — Minister of Industry and Trade Ali Abul Ragheb Sunday discussed with his Syrian counterpart Mohammed Al Imadi here means of bolstering bilateral trade relations and enhancing commercial exchange. Mr. Abul Ragheb said he reviewed with Mr. Imadi commercial protocols and minutes of meetings signed by Jordanian and Syrian officials. Mr. Abul Ragheb is currently in Syria to chair the Jordanian-Syrian Trade Committee, which started here late Sunday. The committee will discuss the mechanisms of the economic agreements between both countries.

Stone faces, scrap metal bodies, and an art about human suffering

By May Muzaffar
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The world created by Nuha Radi, as displayed in an exhibition in the lush gardens of Darat Al Funun, Jebel Weibdeh, is undoubtedly a mixture of contemplated thought and fantasy.

The artist's work, created through the use of stone and scrap metal, is laid out in randomly but strategically chosen areas of the gardens at Darat Al Funun.

Ms. Radi has visualised her world without inhibitions, freely collecting her material out of car parts and scrap metal and rounded stones to create images which, she believes, fit in with the prevailing situation of the Iraqi people.

Funny and strange as they may seem, Nuha Radi's "people," as she likes to call them, make you feel rather confused.

Would you laugh loudly? Smile at them, or simply turn your head and leave

indifferently? They may create different reactions. Yet this controversial image is a true reflection of the present time: An image that embodies the absurdity of the suffering imposed upon human beings.

Despite her exposure to prominent Arab poets, Ms. Radi chose to break abruptly from an art she once practised upon discovering an innate feeling that she could no longer work with clay.

This could be yet a further stage as evidence from what she told me on one occasion:

"Maybe I'll come back." Looking for alternate means of expression, Ms. Radi turned to painting. Being primarily motivated by form in its three-dimensional shape, Ms. Radi used the form physically rather than through illusory means.

Her favourite theme is portraits of people close and intimate to her.

An interest in archaeology also brought her close to history and nature, close to its elementary objects.

For over a year now, she has been painstakingly looking for a means of expression whereby she can reflect herself through the use of ready-made materials.

The medium she now chooses is stones. Ms. Radi is fascinated by their shapes and ability to be transformed into different forms. The result of this experience was shown in an exhibition first held in Beirut and later in Baghdad. The display in Beirut was open air, close to nature, which she believes to be the womb and grave.

In Baghdad, subjected to the injustice caused by the sanctions, Ms. Radi searched for fresh materials which she came across only by chance. It was in scrap metal that she discovered the possibility of developing

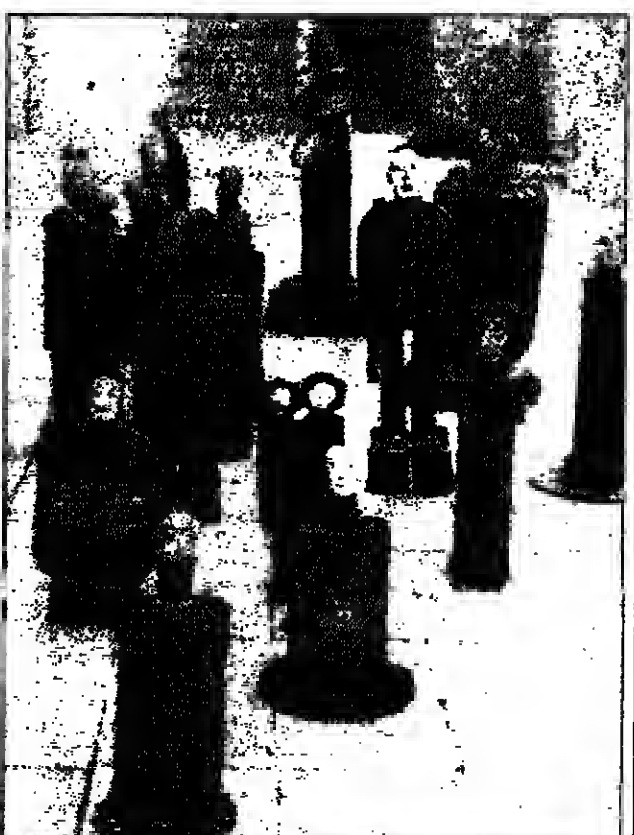
an art language of her own. To her, those objects came to reflect an expression which she would elaborate on to maintain a sense of reality, and it is through these objects that she gives shape to her world.

The objects mainly reflect people, different sorts of people handled by the artist with deep affection. Although dressed up colourfully, they never fail to exhibit their shabby and miserable appearance, a fair and apt reflection of real circumstances.

The stone and metal statues have a life of their own but they lack something very essential: Security. They seem threatened. They are fragile, ready to fall apart at any moment, yet they carry on their daily life, get married, have children, observe beauty and die. Life goes on irrespective of the hard conditions, as inevitable as death.

Ms. Radi's world, absurd as it may seem, is real. Its reality comes from the fact that the uncertainty which characterises those human beings, does not simply reflect the present, it retains a long history as well.

The stone and metal people stand poised helplessly,



Metal scrap people in colourful tones. The artist uses the strong contrast of metal and colour to create thematic tension.

staring back in vain, taking us back to an ancient history where 'Abu' (the most characterised Sumerian statues) and his family stood as witnesses to an uncertain

future. Nuha Radi's exhibition will run until Sept. 28.

The writer is an Iraqi poet and critic. She contributed this article to the Jordan Times.

Artist Nuha Radi's stone-faced family in close-knit space

Fresh fighting erupts in Sri Lanka

COLOMBO (AFP) — Fresh fighting erupted in eastern Sri Lanka Sunday as elite police commandos moved against jungle bases of Tamil Tiger guerrillas triggering heavy gun battles, official sources said.

The Special Task Force (STF) commandos carried out attacks in the Batticaloa district against the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), a day after the rebels attacked an STF jungle base in the region, the sources said.

There were no immediate reports of casualties in Sunday's fighting but on Saturday the STF claimed to have killed at least 36 rebels for the loss of six of its own men, including an officer. Eleven STF constables were wounded.

Security forces recovered 24 LTTE hooties while ground troops confirmed that rebels had removed at least 12 more bodies. The military claimed that the rebel casualties could be higher.

The failed bid to attack the STF camp was the latest setback suffered by the rebels, who lost more than 300 fighters in an attack against the main Weli Oya military base in the northeast.

Meanwhile, thousands of people in Sri Lanka's beleaguered north face hunger due to a standoff between the Red Cross and the government ahead of a widely expected army offensive against the Tamil rebel stronghold, officials said Sunday.

A rebel radio broadcast by the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) said a U.N. observer was discussing the food emergency with guerrilla leaders on the stronghold on the Jaffna peninsula in the north.

Three-hundred-thousand people are threatened by the month-old food crisis, brought on by the suspension of food shipments after the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) refused to escort government vessels because of safety fears.

An official quoted the government agent in Jaffna as saying, "There is no more food in government stores."

Jaffna government agent K. Ponnasalam last week appealed directly to President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaramanga to intervene in the dispute.

Diplomats said government forces had apparently prepared an elaborate plan

for a major assault on Jaffna, headquarters of Tiger chief Velupillai Prabhakaran, before the next rainy season, due in less than two months.

They were, however, divided in seeing a link between the suspension of food supplies to Jaffna and the government's war strategy.

"If people starve, more and more of them will join the LTTE war effort," a diplomat told Reuters. "It doesn't make sense for the government to deliberately cut food supplies to Jaffna."

Others said the suspension of food shipments to the northern region had enabled Colombo to pressure the Tigers to open two strategic land routes.

"If the LTTE is interested in ensuring that the people they are seeking to 'liberate' are adequately fed... why do they keep the land route through Elephant Pass and Pooneryn blocked?" said the pro-government Daily News Saturday.

Senior Tiger commanders, bracing for the government offensive, have fanned out across the peninsula, setting up roadblocks and ringing their positions with mines, diplomats said.

"They don't appear to be

planning to open any road for the troops," a diplomat said.

The ICRC, which had been protecting six ships transporting a monthly average of 10,000 tonnes of supplies provided by the government for Jaffna civilians, says it was forced to suspend operations after its own ship hit a mine.

Regular supplies of essential food and medicines have dried up since the end of July while the ICRC clarified security guarantees for ICRC-protected ships from the Tigers and government forces.

It says it is prepared to escort ships to the Tiger-controlled Point Pedro on the Jaffna peninsula, but not to the government-controlled port of Kankesanthurai where the armed forces want it to unload supplies.

The ICRC has security guarantees for Point Pedro from the Tigers, fighting for a homeland in the north and east, but not for Kankesanthurai, where a mine sank an ICRC vessel earlier this year, killing an Indonesian crew member.

Its subsequent revival of operations to Point Pedro sparked allegations of a pro-Tiger bias, denied by the ICRC.

Cambodian police shooting spree hurts 4 foreigners

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — Cambodian civil and military police went on a shooting spree here early Sunday injuring four foreigners, two seriously, according to embassy officials, witnesses and police sources.

Two Bulgarians, including the son of a diplomat, a Briton and an Australian were injured in two separate incidents in the same location around 1 a.m. (1700 GMT) after apparently being mistaken for fleeing thieves, they said.

Sunday's incidents follow the kidnapping of a Malaysian casino executive on Aug. 17 by members of a military police unit and comes as the Cambodian government is making a concerted effort to improve its image for tourists.

Australian Iain Howatson, 26, an employee of the local Land Rover dealership was injured shortly after midnight when heavily-armed military police manning a checkpoint near Independence Monument opened fire on his motorcycle, hitting the right front fork and throwing him off, witnesses said.

Another bullet grazed his arm and he was treated and discharged at a local clinic for that and a head wound sustained when he hit the pavement, an Australian embassy official said.

Shortly afterwards, Bulgarians Dimitir Ivanov, 18, and Braiko Zahov, 17, and Briton Gregory James, 27, were fired on in the same area while riding a motorcycle, Mr. James said.

Ivanov, the son of a Bulgarian embassy attaché Vasko Ivanov, suffered bullet wounds in the neck, back and right shoulder but was conscious and resting at Phnom Penh's Calmette Hospital Sunday afternoon.

Zahov, a visiting friend of Ivanov's from Sofia, suffered a serious head injury when he fell from the motorcycle, but is expected to recover, doctors said.

Mr. James, an English language teacher originally from Cornwall, England who has lived in Phnom Penh for two years, was shot once in the right arm.

"We were in the wrong place at the wrong time," he said from his hospital bed. "Simple as that."

Mr. James said he and friends had been robbed of some of their belongings including two mobile phones and their wallets.

Witnesses said the men who fired at the four foreigners with assault rifles were all uniformed.

According to police sources, three road blocks were erected Saturday night in the area around the towering monument in downtown Phnom Penh to control access to the house of Cambodia's Second Prime Minister Hun Sen.

Mr. Hun Sen lives across from the monument which sits in the centre of a major roundabout.

Burma asks Thais to cut support for opium king

RANGOON (R) — Burma's military is closing in on Shan opium warlord Khun Sa in the Golden Triangle but neighbouring Thailand must cut off border support for the trafficker if he is to be finally crushed, a senior military official told Reuters.

"We are alone in the fight against narcotics and Khun Sa. We told the Thais and the U.S. to get him from the Thai side. If they are seriously interested in eradicating the problem they must help us finish him," Colonel Kyaw Win, deputy director of the Directorate of Defence Services Intelligence, said in an interview late Friday.

"Our number one enemy Khun Sa will fall quickly only if the Thais cut off logistics lines helping him along their border," he added.

"We believe the Thai government is sincere in wanting to get rid of the problem, but in the remote border areas where it has little influence there are corrupt civil and military officials who are helping Khun Sa," he said.

Burmese military officers claim Khun Sa's rebels injured in battles with their troops have been given access to medical attention in Thai border hospitals despite Thai military checkpoints.

"Most of Khun Sa's ammunition, logistics and food comes from the other side of our border. While his supporters can get medical attention our troops die on the way to our far away hospitals after fighting," Col. Kyaw Win said.

The embattled Khun Sa, 61, is the most prominent drug trafficker in the Golden Triangle, where the borders of Burma, Laos and Thailand meet. He is wanted by Burma, the United States and Thailand on drug charges.

Khun Sa has been hit by a major split within his armed Mong Tai Army (MTA) and deserters have formed a rival grouping that is said to be supported by Burma's ruling State Law and Order Restoration Committee (SLORC).

Burma, which in the past had to fight a host of Breakaway ethnic rebel groups, has concluded ceasefires with 15 of 16 rebel groups. It is now in a good position to concentrate its attacks on Khun Sa's army, military officials said.

The Shan breakaway group from Khun Sa and ethnic Wa fighters will also join Burmese troops in the assault on him and Khun Sa's future does not look bright," Col. Kyaw Win said.

India cautious on talks with Kashmir militants

SRINAGAR, India (R) — Indian authorities said Sunday that talks with guerrillas holding four Westerners hostage in Kashmir were progressing well, but indicated they thought the eight-week ordeal might continue.

An official spokesman in Srinagar, the summer capital of India's Jammu and Kashmir state, told Reuters Sunday morning that contact with the shadowy Al Faran militant group had been made within the preceding 24 hours.

"We are cautiously hopeful," the spokesman said. "In a given situation, one has to look at either the optimistic or pessimistic side. We're looking at the brighter side."

But the two sides would still need some time to narrow differences, he said.

Authorities said a tape recording and photographs of the captive tourists, along with continued contacts through unidentified intermediaries, had raised hopes Al Faran militants might release the men unharmed.

American Donald Hutchings, German Dirk Hasert and Britons Keith Mangan and Paul Wells said they had "no problems" and told their female companions they loved them on a tape recording dated Aug. 18.

But officials who released the audio cassette along with five black-and-white photographs, said they did not intend to ask for fresh proof that the captives were still alive.

"We have reason to believe that the hostages are safe," the official spokesman said, but he gave no details.

demanded that India release 15 jailed militants to win the freedom of the four, is believed to be willing to settle for just three members of the Pakistan-based Harkat-ul-Ansar, which New Delhi claims is linked to the hostage-takers.

Harkat-ul-Ansar, which has condemned the abductions, has denied any ties to Al Faran.

India has repeatedly said it will not swap criminals for the three Harkat-ul-Ansar members, Zakiyul Abidin, Nazirul Islam, Langryal and Massoud Azhar, for the hostages.

The situation could well drag on some more, because there is no meeting ground between the two sides," a senior police official said.

"We are determined not to free any militants, but Al Faran is equally set on getting the men it wants."

Indian officials repeated Sunday that they would not strike a deal with Al Faran that entailed the exchange of militants for hostages.

But they said a solution might be found involving the release of other separatists and the hostages.

"While the hardcore criminals may not be released, we will try to work out a comprehensive formula that would facilitate the release of the hostages," a senior official said.

India regularly reviews the status of jailed separatists and occasionally release some. Authorities said over 150 people held on charges of militancy were released in Kashmir in the past two weeks.

Liberia's warring parties observe new truce

MONROVIA (R) — Liberia's latest peace accord appeared to be taking root Sunday after a ceasefire came into force and officials said the warring factions had been observing it well in advance.

The ceasefire, which took effect from midnight Saturday, was a key element of the accord signed by leaders of all Liberia's warring factions in the Nigerian capital Abuja last Sunday to try to end more than five years of civil war.

A military delegation from Ghana, whose President Jerry Rawlings helped broker the peace accord, visited the towns of Buchanan, Kakata and Tubmanburg Saturday to assess the situation.

"The chairman has charged my team to go round and monitor how the warring factions are responding to the ceasefire accord and the general reaction of the people," delegation leader Brigadier Francis Agyemfra told reporters.

In the port of Buchanan, local official Moses Vah told the delegation the towns had been peaceful since the accord was announced last weekend.

"Since last Saturday, there has been no fighting and this Friday night I slept like a log knowing that peace is in sight," he said.

He said that although most of the fighters were aware of the ceasefire, "there are a few pockets of men who have detached themselves from the mainstream and are in the hush, unaware of this development, but these could be handled once communication gets to them."

In Tubmanburg, General Brailey Lincoln of the ULLMO militia said the war had gone on long enough.

"As soon as we receive the instructions from our leaders in Monrovia, we will proceed with disarmament and demobilisation, to show the others the way to peace," he said.

Mr. Rao told a meeting of Congress members of parliament Saturday, the last day of the session, that they should "go to the people and educate them on what the Congress government has done during the past four years," a party statement said.

Mr. Rao told the meeting he expected the investigation into the assassination of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi by a Tamil suicide bomber in May, 1991, to be completed by December.

Gandhi's widow, Sonia, in a speech in his old constituency of Amethi Thursday, criticised the slow pace of the probe. In a thinly veiled



Employees of the Beijing International Convention Centre (BICC) arrange the United Nations flag at the head of national flags of U.N. member countries. The U.N.'s Fourth World Conference on Women will open at the BICC on Sept. 4 (AFP photo)

Women arrive in China for NGO forum

BEIJING (Agencies) — Hundreds of Chinese workers in pink shirts welcomed thousands of women arriving Sunday to a grassroots forum in Beijing, but customs forced one human rights group to tear a cartoon of Deng Xiaoping out of a book.

Organisers estimated about 2,000 people were arriving in Beijing Sunday for the non-governmental organisation (NGO) forum on women that begins Wednesday in suburban Haiou, transformed from a sleepy tourist town in the shadow of the Great Wall to frantic host for nearly 30,000 women.

"The Chinese are trying their best," NGO convenor Supatra Masdit told Reuters. "They give in to everything we request. We never expected this, it is a lot better than I expected."

Hundreds of English-speaking student volunteers, identifiable by their pastel pink shirts, struggled to help women pouring off flights into Beijing's capital airport.

"How do I get to my hotel?" "How much do I have to pay?" "Please write down for me the address of my hotel in Chinese" were some of the appeals from women arriving from Nigeria, Spain and Britain.

For most women, the biggest problem at the airport was a shortage of baggage carts.

For the organising committee of the People's Decade for Human Rights Education, the problem was customs.

Customs officials spent two hours sifting through the 16 boxes of materials group members had brought for their forum workshop, removed sample leaflets and hauled at a book with a cartoon caricaturing Chinese paramount leader Deng Xiaoping.

"They looked at it, and looked at it and found a

picture of a cartoon of a Chinese dictator, saying 'no human rights here.' They were very offended," executive director Shulamith Koenig said in an interview.

"I told them I will not leave until I get my book back. I tore the page out and gave it to them and they let me go with my book," she said.

"I felt kind of upset because I was coming to a country where certain human rights are here, such as food, but others, such as political and civil, are not," Ms. Koenig said.

However, most women were delighted with their reception.

"We have no problems coming here from the airport," said Mary Casor from the Brazilian Confederation of Domestic Workers' Labour Union. "It is very beautiful and the volunteers are very kind."

In Haiou, rows of Chinese stared as Nigerian women in flowing gowns and colourful turbans joined women from Spain, the United States and Britain to register for their passes and check into hotels.

Pastel yellow, pink and blue flags and red banners decorated the streets of the town. Only special buses and cars with passes were allowed to use the road from Beijing. All other vehicles were banned to avoid delays on the 90-minute drive from Beijing Airport.

Helen O'Connell of Women in Development Europe voiced anxiety at the distance of the venue from the site of the Sept. 4-15 U.N. World Conference on Women in central Beijing.

"The NGO forum should be held near the official conference to facilitate dialogue," she said.

Ms. Masdit, speaking as she watched 6,000 Chinese rehearse a spectacular opening ceremony for the forum

at Beijing's Olympic Stadium, said: "I think it will be successful. Women want to come together and set their own agendas and work together."

She said 26,690 people had confirmed hotel reservations for the conference, and more were arriving to take pot luck on a room in China's capital.

On the stadium floor, performers grouped to form the Chinese characters "Beijing" and the English letters "NGO."

Among the few unhappy voices were Beijing's ubiquitous watermelon sellers. They have been banned from the streets during the conference, the Beijing Evening News said.

Meanwhile, the upcoming U.N. conference on women has proved to be a political obstacle course for U.S. President Bill Clinton, not only abroad with sensitive Sino-U.S. relations, but also back home with the so-called "religious right."

Following the return to the United States of Chinese-American human rights activist Harry Wu, the administration gave the green light for first lady Hillary Clinton to attend the conference — despite objections from Republican critics.

Yet the couple, on vacation in the western state of Wyoming, found themselves fending off attacks not on the foreign policy front, but closer to home.

Religious conservatives, and Republican candidates who are hoping to court their support, criticised the conference as a left-wing attack on "traditional values," a meeting that will promote practices such as abortion.

James Dobson, head of the conservative Focus on the Family group, called the U.N. meeting "the most radical, atheistic and anti-family crusade in the history of the world."

Clinton warns Nigerian military ruler

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton has warned Nigeria's military ruler, General Abacha, not to execute any of the alleged coup plotters convicted in secret trials last month, the Washington Post reported Sunday.

Quoting unidentified government sources, the paper said Mr. Clinton telephoned and wrote to the Nigerian leader recently.

The U.S. president told Gen. Abacha that Nigeria's efforts to restore itself to Washington's good graces, get off the U.S. list of drug trafficking states and win per-

mission for its national airline to resume lucrative U.S. service were doomed if executions were carried out, according to the post.

Nigeria also had been informed that the fence-mending diplomatic mission of Donald McHenry, Mr. Clinton's special emissary to Nigeria, would be suspended if the alleged plotters were put to death, the newspaper said.

Mr. McHenry, a former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, is scheduled to return to Nigeria on Sept. 2.

Former Nigerian ruler General Olusegun Obasanjo

and his then deputy Major General Shehu Musa Yar'Adua were among the 40 servicemen and civilians convicted after secret trial.

Their sentences have not been made public but newspapers say Gen. Yar'Adua and 13 others were sentenced to death and Gen. Obasanjo and some others were given life jail terms.

The United States and other Western governments, which have been pressing Gen. Abacha to restore democracy, condemned the secret trial and threatened sanctions against Nigeria if the sentences were not commuted.

India's Rao reasserts authority after broadside

NEW DELHI (R) — Indian Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao reasserted his authority over the ruling Congress Party this weekend after a broadside from former leader Rajiv Gandhi's widow, telling workers to go and prepare the country for general elections.

Mr. Rao told a meeting of Congress members of parliament Saturday, the last day of the session, that they should "go to the people and educate them on what the Congress government has done during the past four years," a party statement said.

Mr. Rao told the meeting he expected the investigation into the assassination of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi by a Tamil suicide bomber in May, 1991, to be completed by December.

Gandhi's widow, Sonia, in a speech in his old constituency of Amethi Thursday, criticised the slow pace of the probe. In a thinly veiled

attack on Mr. Rao, she said the party should follow the principles set out by her husband.

The speech set off another round of soul searching by members of Congress, which is at a low ebb following a series of state election reverses and a bitter internal struggle that led to a faction breaking away in June.

With general elections now only months away — the government has said it will call them by April — and Congress facing the prospect of a severe drubbing at the polls, many party members are casting around for a new impetus.

There had been wide speculation that Sonia Gandhi would use the Amethi speech to declare her entry, or that of her son Rahul, into the political arena.

But the tentative nature of her approach appears to have backfired, allowing Mr. Rao to take back the initiative and begin to fire his party into

preparing for the election.

"It was not a political statement, merely emotional blackmail," the Statesman newspaper commented on Mrs. Gandhi's speech.

"She must be told plainly that to be constantly reminded that her husband and his mother died for the country is getting tiresome," it said.

A group of middle-ranking Congress legislators who had been reported to be planning to visit Sonia Gandhi to pledge their support after the Amethi speech apparently abandoned the idea, fearing the gesture would be wrongly interpreted.

Mr. Rao told the meeting of Congress members of parliament "the party would prepare for the elections, including selection of the candidates, sufficiently in advance," deftly reminding them that their futures were in his hands.

candidates for the election? Is there any reason why they should antagonise the party president at this juncture?" the Pioneer quoted a Congress veteran as saying.

"Why should any congressman get the wrath of Narasimha Rao then by clamouring at the gates of 10 Janpath (Sonia Gandhi's residence)," he added.

The prime minister told the parliamentary party meeting that members should highlight the pro-poor emphasis of his administration, a theme is becoming one of his major campaign planks.

The issue also gave him a chance to rebut Sonia Gandhi's speech.

"He stressed that the government had not deviated from the policy of the party, laid down by Nehru and pursued by Indira and Rajiv Gandhi, namely upliftment of the poorer sections," the party statement said.

Depardieu wins prize at Montreal Film Festival

MONTREAL (AFP) — French actor Gerard Depardieu was awarded the Grand Prix Des Ameriques at the Montreal Film Festival for his contribution to cinema. Depardieu, who just completed work on his latest movie Bogus, starring U.S. actress Whoopi Goldberg and directed by Canadian filmmaker Norman Jewison, was given the prestigious prize for his "exceptional contribution" to film.

The French actor told a news conference prior to the award ceremony that he did not disapprove of American "remakes" of European movies and declined to lambast Hollywood for producing film works that have mass appeal. "European cinema is going strong and it will continue to grow," he said. "But I am not sure that I understand what is meant by 'European cinema'."

When we are making a movie, the money comes from everywhere including the United States, as do the actors and the creative cast," he said.

Toddler survives crack cocaine overdose

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (R) — A two-year-old girl swallowed a stone of crack cocaine, but was recovering from the overdose in hospital, police said Saturday. The toddler was no longer in critical condition and was moved out of an intensive care unit where she had been since police found her suffering seizures Tuesday in Texarkana. Detectives were investigating how she obtained the drug. "We're surmising the child found a rock of crack cocaine and swallowed it," a Texarkana police spokeswoman said. The girl's mother left her in the care of a relative while she went to a hair salon, she said. No one has been arrested.

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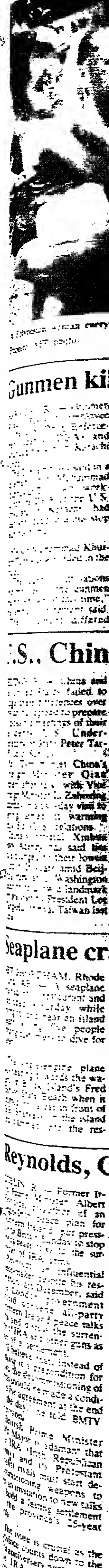
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World News



A Polynesian woman carrying a young girl walks past a monument erected by organizers of an anti-nuclear rally in Papeete (AFP photo)

Gunmen kill Pakistani employee of U.S. agency

KARACHI (R) — Gunmen killed a Pakistani employee of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) and wounded his son in Karachi Sunday.

The U.S. embassy said in a statement that Mohammad Shah Nawaz Toor, who worked for the DEA at the U.S. consulate in Karachi, had been shot dead at a bus stop near his home.

His son Muhammad Khuram Toor was wounded in the attack.

"The identity, affiliations and motives of the gunmen are not known at this time," the embassy statement said.

The statement differed from a police account, which said that Mr. Toor, a 40-year-old retired army major, and his son had been in a car with a driver when a lone gunman on a motorcycle attacked them in the north Nazimabad area of central district.

The gunman stopped near Mr. Toor's Suzuki Alto car at about 7.30 a.m. (0230 GMT) and fired six shots at close range, a police spokesman in Karachi said.

Three bullets hit Mr. Toor, who collapsed and died on the spot. His 16-year-old son was wounded and was taken to the Abbasi State Hospital by the driver, who was unhurt.

Mr. Toor's son was con-

U.S., China differences remain over Taiwan

BEIJING (R) — China and the United States failed to bridge their differences over Taiwan but agreed to prepare for possible meetings of their presidents, U.S. Under-Secretary of State Peter Tarnoff said Sunday.

Mr. Tarnoff met China's Foreign Minister Qian Qichen after talks with Vice-Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing Saturday in a two-day visit to Beijing aimed at warming chilly Sino-U.S. relations.

China's official Xinhua News Agency has said they have plunged to their lowest point in 16 years amid Beijing's fury at a Washington decision to allow a landmark private visit by President Lee Teng-hui of rival Taiwan last June.

"While on the substance the differences (over Taiwan) were not bridged, I think that we did have a full airing of views and there was a commitment on both sides that there are other aspects of the relationship which we are determined to proceed to work on together," Mr. Tarnoff told a news conference.

An aspect was to help prepare for a meeting between Mr. Qian and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher in New York in late September at the U.N. General Assembly and a possible meeting of the presidents of the two countries in late October in the United States, Mr. Tarnoff said.

"We agreed both sides would need to prepare thor-

Seaplane crashes into U.S. restaurant; 5 killed

NEW SHOREHAM, Rhode Island (AP) — A seaplane crashed into a restaurant and exploded Saturday while trying to land near an island beach, killing five people forcing customers to dive for safety.

The single-engine plane was heading towards the waters off Block Island's Fred Benson State Beach when it crashed into a car in front of G.R. Sharkey's and slammed into the restaurant.

The plane exploded, causing a fire that destroyed the single-storey, wood-frame building, which also housed a gas station. The plane narrowly missed the two gas pumps.

"It was like the whole world exploded," said Corrie Heinz, a bartender at a tavern across the street from Sharkey's.

Christopher McGinniss, a gas station attendant, said he

Reynolds, Clinton pressure U.K. on N. Ireland

DUBLIN (R) — Former Irish Prime Minister Albert Reynolds, co-author of an Anglo-Irish peace plan for Northern Ireland, put pressure on Britain Sunday to stop linking peace talks to the surrender of IRA arms.

Reynolds, an influential peace-maker despite his resignation last December, said the London government should convene all-party Northern Ireland peace talks now and discuss the surrender of IRA and other guns as part of a settlement.

"I believe that, instead of making it a precondition for talks, the decommissioning of arms should be made a condition for agreement at the end of the day," he told BMTV television.

British Prime Minister John Major is adamant that the IRA (Irish Republican Army) and its Protestant loyalist rivals must start decommissioning weapons to win an invitation to new talks to build a lasting settlement to the province's 25-year strife.

The issue is crucial as the province counts down to the first anniversary next week of the IRA ceasefire that ushered in an unprecedented period of peace and the start of a peace process which is

France tells peace fleet to stay away from nuclear test zone

PAPEETE (Agencies) — France Saturday stepped up warnings to a protest flotilla to stay away from Mururoa Atoll, as the Greenpeace flagship Rainbow Warrior II came within a day's sailing of a French fleet protecting the nuclear test site.

The warning that France would stringently defend the exclusion zone declared around the atolls also came as 3,000 demonstrators gathered in the French Polynesia capital to protest against the planned resumption of nuclear tests next month.

The Papeete rally, called by the influential Evangelical Church of French Polynesia, was a sign that even in the French Pacific territory, the tests are opposed.

Demonstrators, assembled around a so-called Village of Peace, prayed against the tests and waved banners reading "No to the bomb, yes to life." Other protests are planned by other groups from Monday.

But the French Navy signalled its intention to seal off Mururoa and the neighbouring test atoll of Fangatau in written warnings to skippers of the peace fleet, that will be led by Rainbow Warrior II.

France has 15 vessels defending the entrance to the Mururoa lagoon where the tests are held. And Vice-Admiral Philippe Evrard, head of French Armed Forces in the South Pacific, warned in a letter being given to the skippers that the test zone was strictly out-of-bounds.

The letter has already been given to the New Zealand Navy survey vessel Tui, which is to accompany the flotilla as far as the exclusion zone. It has also been given to the Greenpeace yacht Vega and one other yacht.

More than 20 ships and yachts are on the way to Mururoa with declared intention of stopping the series of eight underground nuclear blasts, that have been condemned by many countries.

Rainbow Warrior II's skipper, Briton John Castle, has ordered extra practice manoeuvres for the high-speed zodiacs as the flagship closes Mururoa.

Meanwhile, France's Minister for Overseas Terri-

tries Jean Jacques de Peretti arrived in Tahiti Saturday amid tight security as thousands of anti-nuclear protesters staged a rally in Papeete.

Despite Mr. Peretti's pre-dawn arrival at Papeete's airport, up to 140 gendarmes stood guard at the terminal's palm-fringed entrance while the minister gave an impromptu news conference.

Although the main purpose of the visit was to officiate at the close of the 10th South Pacific Games, Mr. Peretti said he would meet political, social and religious leaders during his visit.

He said French Polynesia must prepare for life after nuclear testing and that Paris was moving towards that future.

France, which poured 6.6



A Polynesian sits in Papeete listening to speeches in front of anti-nuclear posters during a demonstration called by the Evangelical Church of French Polynesia to protest the resumption of French nuclear tests on Mururoa Atoll scheduled to begin next month (AFP photo)

Bomb found alongside French high-speed railway

LYON, France (R) — French police Sunday were studying an unexploded bomb found alongside a high-speed rail line in central France, but the government saw no immediate sign of a link to two recent guerrilla attacks in Paris.

A train driver spotted a package by the tracks just north of Lyon as he sped past Saturday morning on the Paris-Lyon line. The area was sealed off and disposal experts defused the 25 kg (55 lb) explosive, in an emptied gas canister.

An explosive device was found Saturday morning, the Interior Ministry said in a statement, confirming media reports earlier Sunday. "The device was transported to the central police laboratory in Paris for analysis."

No one claimed responsibility.

The home-made device, placed by an electric pylon by the track, was apparently meant to go off as a train went by but police said it had a fault in its trigger mechanism. High speed TGV trains travel on the route at more than 200 kmh (125 mph).

Several high-speed trains had sped past before the discovery of the device at around 8.30 a.m. (0630 GMT).

The Interior Ministry said it had no immediate evidence of a link to two bombings in Paris that killed seven people and wounded more than 100. Investigators suspect that Algerian extremists were behind those blasts.

"At the present time, no comparison can be made with the devices that exploded in an underground train on July 25 in Paris and at the Avenue de Friedland on Aug. 17," it said.

The July 25 blast in the underground train at Saint-Michel Station near Notre Dame Cathedral killed seven and wounded 86 people. The Aug. 17 bomb by the Arc De Triomphe wounded 17 people. Both were packed in gas canisters.

France has issued an international arrest warrant for an Algerian man, Abdul Karim Deneche, on suspicion of involvement in the first blast. Mr. Deneche is being held in a jail in Sweden.

Swedish investigators say he has an alibi putting him in Stockholm on the day of the bombing but a French gendarme has said he saw De-

neche in the underground train moments before the blast.

French investigators believe Mr. Deneche is a member of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) fighting to overthrow Algeria's military-backed government. The GIA accuses France of backing the Algerian government.

French railways tightened security, along with stricter police patrols in major cities, airports and frontiers after the first bomb. Saturday's bomb disrupted train schedules but passengers were not told of the reason.

A police officer in Lyon said that "the package... could not have exploded because of a fault."

"Every hypothesis is possible. We don't know if it's some kind of joke or something serious. But the system was pretty primitive, not a military type. The explosive was like a good do-it-yourselfer could make," he said.

In Switzerland earlier this month, a group opposed to France's plans to resume nuclear tests in the South Pacific next month claimed responsibility for firebombing a TGV train in the Swiss capital Bern.

Police said more than one million Swiss francs (\$820,000) worth of damage was caused to the train, which was standing empty in a depot when it was attacked.

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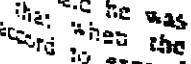
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4 Jordanian siblings undergo sex-change surgery in Nablus

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — The last of four siblings born with a rare defect that left them appearing female but genetically male underwent surgery Sunday to become a boy.

"I had six granddaughters and two grandsons, and now I have six grandsons and two granddaughters. I thank God and the doctor," their grandmother, Fatima Netasha, told the Israeli newspaper Yediot Ahranot.

The youths, ages 10, 11, 12, and 17, live in Amman. Their family brought them to the West Bank town of Nablus for the operation because it was cheaper.

The four were raised as girls. The family first discovered the disorder when the oldest, 17-year-old Muhammad, went through puberty. Muhammad's voice broke and he began to develop facial hair and a male physique.

Mohammad was diagnosed as a genetic male, but with male genitalia that had never descended from the pubic cavity.

His three younger siblings were recently diagnosed with the same genetic defect, which was caused by low testosterone levels and resulted in a female appearance throughout childhood.

Dr. Youssef Al Masri of the Al Jihad hospital in Nablus

operated on Mohammad in 1992, allowing the genitals to descend. Another operation rearranged his urinary tract, and hormone treatment completed the process.

Dr. Masri operated Sunday on the youngest child, 10-year-old Ayar — now called Muhammad. The other two siblings, 11-year-old Dana — now Mahdi — and 12-year-old Hiba — now Majdi — underwent surgery last week.

Afterwards, the youngsters celebrated by cutting their long hair short, removing their jewellery and donning boys' pyjamas.

Anel Ressler, an endocrinologist at Jerusalem's Hadassah hospital who has studied the phenomenon in Gaza's Jahaliya refugee camp where it is widespread, said the value placed by Arab society on having boys is an enticement for the families to undertake the operation.

Mr. Ressler said the condition is common among Palestinians in Jahaliya as a result of intermarriage. One in 150 males in the camp are born with the defect, he said.

Press Television Sunday.

U.N. ponders nightmare scenario in Sarajevo

By Kurt Schork

Reuter

SARAJEVO — Even as efforts to broker a Bosnian peace deal quicken, U.N. officials are pondering the nightmare scenario of a last-ditch bid by separatist Serbs to end the war with an attack on the Bosnian capital, Sarajevo.

U.N. planners say separatist Serbs besieging the city could try to cut the sole government supply route over Mount Igman or assault and occupy the U.N.-held airport, under which a vital Bosnian supply tunnel runs.

Were they to succeed, the Serbs would isolate the capital, bottling up government leaders, 300,000 civilians and thousands of U.N. peacekeepers. Bosnian officials would have no option but to sue for peace.

"It's the only way the Serbs could end the war decisively on their terms," said a U.N. officer who asked not to be named.

"Any attack on Igman or the airport would be high-risk, but the potential reward is there. It's difficult to imagine the Serbs changing a serious confrontation with NATO over anything other than a final victory. That means Sarajevo."

U.N. officials believe that recent defeats suffered by Serb forces in Croatia and Bosnia have emboldened the proud and prickly

Bosnian Serb army commander general Ratko Mladic, past master of the bold counter-stroke.

Mr. Mladic has shown his army to be more than a match for government troops and the combined U.N.-NATO forces arrayed to deter attacks on "safe areas" like Sarajevo.

When the Bosnian Serbs seized hundreds of heavy weapons from U.N. depots around Sarajevo in May, they also took 400 U.N. peacekeepers hostage, using some as human shields to prevent retaliatory NATO air strikes.

Mr. Mladic's men grabbed another 400 Dutch peacekeepers as they overran the "safe area" of Srebrenica in July, threatening to kill them if NATO planes attacked.

U.N. forces are not toothless around Igman or Sarajevo. About 500 British and French members of the U.N. Rapid Reaction Force (RRF) are camped on Mount Igman, west of Sarajevo, backed by artillery, heavy mortars and tanks.

Also on Igman are thousands of Bosnian army troops who could be expected to fiercely oppose any Serb advance on the government's key supply route.

Several hundred French foreign legionnaires hold the airport, separated from Bosnian army and Serb

troops by huge earthen berms but only a few hundred metres of ground.

RRF artillery is within easy range of the airport and NATO fighters on aircraft carriers in the Adriatic are just 30 minutes away.

U.N. officials say both the Igman supply route and the airport are "vital ground" because they represent the only non-Serb controlled access in and out of Sarajevo — essential for both relief supplies and peacekeepers.

The muscle and the mandate are there to oppose any Serb advance but, as always, the question is whether the U.N.-NATO combine has the necessary political will.

The nightmare scenario is a determined Serb attack to seize Sarajevo's airport, with Serb soldiers popping up inside the perimeter from tunnels which U.N. officials suspect are already in place.

Backed by Serb tanks and artillery, these troops might surprise the United Nations and seize substantial numbers of hostages. Jarring NATO and the RRF to attack — the exact point at which Western resolve has cracked in the past.

Having blown up the government supply tunnel under the airport and blocked the last route in and out of Sarajevo, Mr. Mladic might then feel comfortable talking peace.



The stream of refugees continue (AFP file photo)

PLO, Israel sign accord

(Continued from page 1)

over to Palestinian control until the interim agreement is reached.

Much of the accord concerns the minutiae of government. For example, it specifies that Palestinian butane gas cylinders must be a different colour than Israeli ones.

A relatively small audience, including the ambassadors of Russia, the United States, Norway, Israel, as well as a Palestinian representative, attended the ceremony.

"Intensive negotiations are going on in Eilat to finish a full second-stage agreement which we hope we will sign soon to put an end to the tragedies and bloodshed this region has seen," Mr. Tarifi said.

Talks resumed in Eilat on Sunday as the two sides tried to eliminate the remaining barriers to a full accord on extending self-rule.

On Thursday Israel recognised Palestinian rights to water sources in the West Bank, while the PLO agreed to let discussion of the issue be postponed until talks on the final status of the territories, to begin next May.

Wednesday's agreement was the second one turning

over day-to-day duties in the West Bank to Palestinians. Almost a year ago an agreement gave them control over education, health, welfare, tourism and taxation.

The original Washington accord envisioned the elections taking place in July 1994, but the talks have been delayed by violence — particularly attacks on Israelis by Palestinians opposed to the peace pact — and by labour disputes of negotiation.

Also, the negotiators have repeatedly skirted contentious issues like water sharing and the withdrawal of troops from Hebron, a West Bank town where about 400 Israeli settlers live among the 110,000 Palestinian population.

The interim pact settling these issues was expected to be signed early next month in Washington. But an Israeli official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said negotiators were now aiming for finishing in late September and added he was uncertain the signing would be in Washington.

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres voiced hopes that a full agreement could be signed in mid-September in Washington. "It will not be Sept. 7 but a few days after," he said in Tel Aviv.

Jericho remains under siege

(Continued from page 1)

government spokesman Sheldon Schulman. "The Palestinian Authority is also not meeting its commitments to hand them over to Israel."

Palestinian officials said the Jericho siege was a means to pressure the self-rule government into turning over two militants suspected in bombing attacks.

A secret Palestinian military tribunal sentenced Abdul Majid Dudi to 12 years and Rashid Khatib to seven years for their involvement in last week's suicide bombing in Jerusalem and the July 24 bombing in Tel Aviv.

A senior Palestinian security official said the two were members of a ring which planned the two bombings. They were members of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas.

Foreign ministry legal adviser Yoel Zinger said that according to the self-rule agreement, the Palestinian Authority has to hand over any person who committed a crime inside Israel or in Israeli settlements or military areas in the territories.

"If these people did indeed carry out their crime inside Israel... the Palestinian Authority has no judicial authority and is obligated to hand them over to our hands," he said.

Mr. Zinger said he was encouraged by the Palestinian Authority's decision to prosecute the two Hamas activists, but other officials said the authority was not doing enough to prevent attacks against Israelis.

"It is getting a failing mark," said Shimon Shetret, Israel's minister of religious affairs.

Mr. Shetret said he was concerned that when the emerging accord to expand

Palestinian autonomy is implemented, more West Bank towns could become "places of refuge and serve as bases of terror."

"This is what we see as the challenge of the Palestinian authority: to prove it is cooperating with us and not evading its duty according to the (autonomy) agreement," he said.

In a radio interview late Sunday, Israeli Justice Minister David Libai opened the way for a lifting of roadblocks that have prevented drivers from entering or leaving Jericho town for the past five days.

By virtue of the accords signed between us, the Palestinian Authority is not obliged to transfer criminals to us from the moment they are judged and sentenced," he said. "That's why we have not presented any formal extradition request."

Mr. Libai, however, insisted that Israel was right to seek all available information on the "terrorist activities" of the two men.

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said: "We have examined the legal aspects of this question in cabinet and we have concluded that extradition cannot be requested."

Palestinian Prosecutor General Abu Ziad Al Bishawi said the two militants were found guilty mainly of "harming the security" of the self-rule authority, the Palestinian population and the peace process.

According to the radio, the Israeli authorities suspect the Palestinians of jailing the militants to justify their refusal to hand them over.

Yoel Zinger, legal advisor to the Israeli foreign ministry, said: "This sudden trial was strange to say the least. I hope it is not a manoeuvre."

Revegetating degraded land

By John Madeley

"JUST LOOK at this! Sentt Christiansen is standing on a rocky hillside in northern Syria which only two years ago was almost totally degraded."

But now, Drs. Christiansen and Ahmed Osman, pasture specialists with the International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), are excited by what they are seeing.

Overgrazing, poor management by farmers and land tenure systems that give them little encouragement to improve their land, have caused the degradation of between 10 and 15 million hectares of hillside in West Asia (the Middle East) and North Africa.

Pasture land for the sheep has been lost, and milk and meat production have suffered, with fewer lambs being weaned.

In the Syria village of Batajek, near the town of El Bah, Abu Ziad and his two brothers graze their flock of 250 sheep on a hill of some 80 hectares. Lower down in the village they grow barley as feed for the

sheep. Three years ago the three brothers agreed to a plan to revegetate 30 hectares of their hill. And it is the results of this that are causing Drs. Christiansen some excitement.

"We worked with them to revegetate this section of their hill with pasture plants that are found in the area, chiefly medics, annual plants from the same family as alfalfa, and clovers," says Dr. Christiansen.

"We provided them with the seed and pods of these plants to scatter on the hillside. And we asked them not to graze their sheep here until the seed had germinated, matured and set more seed," adds Dr. Osman.

As the hillside was suffering from a phosphorous deficiency, part of it was also fertilised with small amounts of phosphate fertilizer.

Today the result are clear. The hillside has sprung back into life. Land that was almost useless for grazing has been brought back into production.

"I've never seen the hill looking so good," says Abderrahman, Abu Ziad's

older brother, aged 60, pointing to the seeded part. Medics and clovers are growing in abundance — everywhere there are plants, which means that the land is more suitable for grazing sheep.

"The seeds that form on the plants fall to the ground and eventually into a cask or under a stone, and become part of a soil seed bank, which will continue revegetating the area," says Scott Christiansen.

Other farmers in the neighbourhood are seeing for themselves the success that Abu Ziad and his brothers are having, and are becoming interested in doing the same. One farmer, Abu Hassan, is so convinced about the value of medics he is planning to start a small nursery to grow the seeds for over 500 hectares on his own land. ICARDA wants him to grow more than he needs himself, so that extra seed will be available for sale, to barter with, or interest farmers. Up until now ICARDA has provided the seeds.

"All the farmers in the area know what these

medic and clover plants are," says the ICARDA scientists. "They recognise and value them for their qualities, and the contribution they can make to milk production and lamb growth rates. What we need now are mechanisms to increase the supply of seeds, and spread them to their areas with the participation of the farmers."

Drs. Christiansen and Dr. Osman believe that this seeding of degraded areas has an important part to play in stopping the process of land degradation in the West Asia and North Africa region. And it can be done, they emphasise, by using local seeds.

"All the technology we are using is right here — it is locally available plant genetic resources," says Dr. Osman. "All the farmers have to do is not graze their sheep on the plants during the months of April and May when the flowering occurs, and when the plants are setting new seed. After that, the sheep can graze the plants. This management allows a stock of seeds to build up in the soil

to produce plants for the future, but it also presumes that the sheep can be fed elsewhere while the rehabilitation is being implemented."

Meanwhile the other part of Abu Ziad's 80-hectare hill stands in stark contrast — barren, land with virtually no vegetation at this time of the year, and almost useless for grazing. This he plans to put right as soon as he can lay his hands on enough seed.

On a test hillside plot at ICARDA's farm in Aleppo, northern Syria, Fahim Ghassali, a research assistant at the centre, has noticed a spin-off from seeding degraded land. When sheep consume some of the small-seeded clover plants, they eventually, through their feces, deposit up to 70 per cent of those seeds elsewhere. "In this way the sheep are acting as highly efficient seed distributors," says Dr. Ghassali, "playing a key role in helping to spread the seed and regenerate the land."

In Jordan and Lebanon, hillside are also being sown with clover and medic

seeds. Drs. Osman and Christiansen, with colleagues in the Pasture, Forage and Livestock Programme, and Programme leader Gus Gintzburger, are hoping that many countries will adopt the system. But they stress this will take time. "Tradition is strong," says Dr. Christiansen. "Things will not change immediately, but they can start to improve."

ICARDA conducts research in 24 countries in West Asia and North Africa and is part of the worldwide network of research centres that belong to the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research.

An exciting fruit of ICARDA's research is that as much as 15 million hectares of degraded hillside in its 24-country region could be rehabilitated. And that means more than just the revegetation of degraded land. It means more income for farmers and more milk and meat for local people. In today's hungry world, it means more food.

ICARDA

Iraq reports 'new policy'

(Continued from page 1)

Saddam Hussein remain sensitive subjects, make any change in Washington's position unlikely."

Mr. Ekeus said Friday that Iraq had armed biological weapons ready to use against its neighbours in late 1990 but did not fire them because it perceived a nuclear threat from the United States.

Mr. Ekeus said 160 bombs and 25 missiles were armed with botulinum, anthrax or the carcinogenic substance aflatoxin in December 1990.

Those weapons were then taken to two Iraqi air bases for warfare use, he said.

As recently as earlier this month, Iraq denied having developed an offensive biological weapons programme.

Mr. Ekeus said the Iraqis opted not to use their "very aggressive" weapons after then-U.S. Secretary of State James Baker warned his Iraqi counterpart, Tariq Aziz, that the United States would use "drastic measures... a paraphrase the Iraqis understood as a nuclear threat."

Iraqi President Saddam Hussein on Saturday chaired a meeting of senior military officials, the Iraqi News Agency (INA) said.

"The minister of defence, General Sultan Hashem Ahmad, and several heads of the armed forces attended the meeting," INA said, without giving details.

movement of forces toward Kuwait," Adm. Redd told reporters.

The Iraqi daily Babel, which is run by President Saddam's eldest son Uday, on Sunday mocked an offer of asylum by Egyptian leader Hosni Mubarak, and said President Saddam would never leave Iraq.

"You are sadly mistaken, Hosni Mubarak. Saddam is like the Tigris and the Euphrates, neither he nor these rivers will leave Iraq to succumb to the hyenas inside and outside," the paper printed as a headline to an agency report on Mr. Mubarak's comments.

It was the first Iraqi reaction to Mr. Mubarak's declaration that he was prepared to grant President Saddam political asylum if it would "solve" the problem of the Iraqi people and prevent a bloodbath in Iraq.

Israel would have suffered losses had Iraq attacked it with biological weapons during the Gulf war, its former defence minister said Sunday.

Moshe Arens said he was surprised by weekend revelations that Iraq had armed nearly 200 Scud missile warheads and bombs with biological agents shortly before the 1991 war began.

"We considered the possibility of bacteria and nuclear warfare," Mr. Arens told Israel Radio. "The preparation was there, but that doesn't mean that we had the ability to prevent losses had Iraq used these means."

Mr. Arens has said that Israel was considering a massive air assault against Iraq in response to the 39 Scud missiles fired at Tel Aviv and other Israeli cities during the war.

Israel was under heavy pressure from the United States not to retaliate against the Iraqis for fear of splitting the allied coalition, which included Arab states hostile to the Jewish state.

An Iraqi officer who defected to Jordan along with Gen. Hassan is prepared to name people in Western companies who helped Baghdad set up its nuclear, biological and chemical war machine, the London Observer reported Sunday.

House refuses to favour polygamists

(Continued from page 1)

The Islamist deputies' proposal was backed by leftist deputies Mustafa Shunickat and Khalil Haddadin as well as centrist lawmaker Anwar Hadid and independent Islamist Abdul Razzaq Tubeishat.

But Ms. Faisal, in her only chance to partake of the debate, said that polygamy should not be encouraged and that all those who marry more than one wife should be able to provide for them.

Ms. Faisal questioned the grounds on which the husband should receive tax exemption for more than one wife while the inheritance law, which is based on

Crown Prince, Peres meet today

(Continued from page 1)

Jordan and Israel are also seeking to coordinate their presentations at the MENA summit to be held in October and this is also an issue expected to be tackled at today's meeting.

Officials said they expected the Crown Prince and Mr. Peres to review the progress reached so far in coordination of presentations as well as a joint strategy at the summit aimed at attracting investments and foreign companies to the region in

the new-found state of peace and stability.

Also expected to be tackled during today's meetings is the implementation of projects stipulated in the Oct. 26 peace treaty. These include dams in the north and a water desalination plant that aim at ensuring that Jordan would get its share of water as agreed upon in the peace treaty. Feasibility studies financed by the European Union are under way on the projects.

As far as I know, all wives share the same inheritance of the one-eighth (percentage)."

The House is expected to continue discussions of the income tax draft law on Wednesday. The proposed legislation will introduce sweeping reductions in income tax levied on individuals, banks and companies. It is part of a trade package which includes an amendment to the Sales Tax Law as well as the Encouragement of Investment Law. All draft laws are expected to be finalised during this extraordinary session ahead of the Middle East and North Africa economic summit that will be held in Amman at the end of October.

"Why should the husband be entitled to tax exemption for all wives while these wives' rights are denied in the inheritance law and have to share the same percentage of the one eighth that is allotted to one wife?" asked Ms. Faisal.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education Abdul Ra'ouf Rawahdeh, who is also a deputy, supported Ms. Faisal's arguments.

"This article (on tax exemption) is not part of a civil status law and we are not interfering in marriage affairs," Mr. Rawahdeh said.

Economy

Arab Gulf states urged to forge export strategy

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab Gulf states should map out a joint strategy to increase their non-oil exports as part of their attempts to reduce dependence on volatile crude earnings, according to a regional study.

The strategy should include setting up export information centres in the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), staging joint exhibitions abroad, and creating an export promotion council grouping the six members, said a GCC study.

"The information centres will provide statistics and other data on foreign markets, demand and supply, and marketing opportunities," said the study, published in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) daily Al Bayan Sunday.

"Such centres should be linked to the World Trade Organisation and international export information centres in Singapore, Taiwan and Hong Kong," added the study, issued by the federation of GCC chambers of commerce and industry.

The GCC's non-oil exports stood at around \$13 billion in 1994, including nearly \$5.7 billion worth of exports among the six members.

The figure is nearly double that in 1985 as GCC states pressed ahead with industrialisation campaigns to diversify their oil-reliant economies.

The six members — Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and the UAE — have pumped more than \$40 billion into nearly 5,000 industrial projects but most of their products have remained confined to tight industries as they lack technology for heavy industry.

Despite progress, non-oil exports, including petrochemicals, are still a fraction of their crude and gas sales of more than \$70 billion a year. The industrial sector also does not exceed seven per cent of the gross domestic product compared with over 35 per cent of the oil sector.

Apart from chemicals, GCC industries include cement and other building materials, paper, home appliances, farm products, clothes and textiles.

The six members, which control around 45 per cent of the world's oil reserves, have been locked in negotiations with Japan, the European Union and the United States to acquire industrial technology in return for long-term crude supplies. But industrial powers are reluctant to set up major projects on the grounds the region is relatively small and investment laws are restrictive.

"Gulf states should set up a higher council to coordinate their industries and develop exports," the study said. "They should also step up exhibitions abroad and upgrade their products to boost their competitiveness."

Israeli cabinet approves \$52.4b budget

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel's cabinet approved a 1996 budget that includes a planned transfer of a billion shekels (\$330 million) to Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority, triple last year's figure, officials said.

The 160 billion-shekel (\$52.4 billion) budget has been criticised for doing too little to reduce Israel's relatively high taxation and government expenditure.

But Finance Minister Avraham Shohat maintained that it would enable the Jewish state to continue a five-year boom that has seen its economy grow by about a third.

The proposal, approved by a 16-1 cabinet vote, must now pass parliament.

It includes across-the-board cuts of 1.7 billion shekels (\$557 million) but leaves the military budget about the same in real terms at 25.2 billion shekels (\$8.3 billion), said finance ministry spokesman Eli Yosef.

The army, however, has complained that since a planned troop withdrawal from parts of the West Bank slated to become autonomous will likely cost hundreds of millions of dollars, the current funding level was insufficient.

"I am totally unsatisfied with the proposed military budget," said Health Minister Ephraim Sneh, a former West Bank military governor who cast the only opposing vote.

"In such a year... we can increase the deficit and raise taxes a little."

The budget proposal foresees minor tax cuts and reduces the deficit from three per cent to 2.5 per cent of national product.

About 35 per cent of the budget goes to loan repayment — much of that to the United States, which provides Israel with \$3 billion in loans and grants annually.



A shopper browses for new titles at a brisk illegal street market for bootleg foreign computer software on CD-ROM in Beijing's "Silicon Valley" computer district. Chinese and U.S. trade officials are holding talks in Beijing on copyright protection as part of a six-month review of a Sino-U.S. accord on intellectual property rights protection signed in February (AFP photo)

Russian banks face new test after credit crunch

MOSCOW (R) — Russian banks face a new test this week after the central bank injected cash into the economy to ease a severe credit crunch.

The central bank and government said their actions would be enough to calm the crisis, which sparked fears of bank closures or mergers, but Russian markets still show signs of reacting to events, reserved judgment.

Some economists and officials said such problems were common in economies in transition and were partly a result of Russia's success in achieving a measure of stabilisation.

The non-payments crisis arose after some banks stopped lending, fearing they would not get their money back. On Thursday, overnight interest rates soared to 1,000 per cent from Wednesday's 500 per cent. The interbank credit market froze.

The central bank made 300 billion roubles (\$68 million) of short-term credits available to the banks. It also bought treasury bills worth one trillion roubles (\$227 million) on Friday to pump extra cash into the market.

Despite this, the credit market remained comatose but acting central bank head Tatyana Paramonova told a news conference the situation should be back to normal by Monday or Tuesday.

However, the respected Sevodnya daily said Saturday that doubts remained about whether the action would be enough to revive the market and that further cash injections could mean higher inflation and a weakening of financial policy.

Russia has cut monthly inflation from 17.8 per cent in January to 5.4 per cent in July and expects further falls.

First Deputy Prime Minister Anatoly Chubais said Friday the credits would not be inflationary or derail economic reform.

Moscow agreed strict targets for credit issue with the International Monetary Fund as a condition for the release of a \$6.4 billion standby loan earlier this year.

"We have not once, not for one month, not for one day, broken the terms of the standby... for us these are principal limits from which we will not depart," Mr. Chubais said.

The Kommersant daily financial newspaper commented Saturday that the government could not have ignored the crisis with parliamentary elections due in December.

"To allow the collapse of fairly large banks on the eve of elections would have meant practically giving away most votes to the left-wing opposition," it said.

Some bankers said the crisis, however it was resolved, heralded a shake-out of the system. "The time is ripe for a restructuring of the banking system," one told Sevodnya.

Mr. Chubais said Friday the government would set up a working group to look at the restructuring of the banking system.

Russia has almost 3,000 banks, many have survived because of big returns on rouble instruments in a time of high inflation.

With inflation falling, rouble instruments are less profitable while high interest rates are making it hard for companies to repay loans.

France's Madelin defiant after welfare clash

PARIS (R) — France's finance and economy minister Alain Madelin, forced out of the cabinet after a clash over welfare handouts, hit back Saturday by saying voters wanted change and not programmes tailored for trade unions.

"I'm sticking to what I said, and that's final," he told reporters in Saint-Juste in north-west France a day after his shock resignation caused the three-month-old centre-right government's first crisis.

"Those people who like me voted for (President) Jacques Chirac voted for a programme of change and not for the programme of the unions," said Mr. Madelin, a blunt-spoken free-marketeer. He added that public sector wages had been rising too fast.

Mr. Madelin, 49, triggered union anger on Thursday by urging reforms to tighten public sector pensions and welfare handouts in an outburst that exposed conflict between Mr. Chirac's goals of creating jobs while slashing big budget deficits.

Prime Minister Alain Juppe accused him of contradicting the spirit of Mr. Chirac's reforms and Mr. Madelin called his departure "a divorce by mutual consent."

Mr. Chirac has promised to give top priority to a war on unemployment, including job creation and wage hikes. He also wants to slash the budget deficit and enable France to meet criteria under the European Union's Maastricht treaty for joining a single currency.

Mr. Madelin's successor Jean Arthuis, 50, a pro-European and until now minister for economic development and planning, said Saturday that he would push for all of Mr. Chirac's policies.

He said the first priority was "winning the battle for jobs while preserving social cohesion... the second priority is to control public spending... and to cut deficits."

"We must control public spending and cut the deficit. Because if we could not achieve that we would take the risk of fuelling interrogations from financial markets... the priority is to make interest rates fall," he told France 2 Television.

He said that foreign currency markets, where the franc fell after Mr. Madelin's resignation, should win confidence from "what has already been initiated."

Newspapers were unanimous saying that Mr. Madelin had been forced out by Mr. Juppe, who was willing to sacrifice a top minister rather than risk a bruising confrontation with unions.

"I fear a serious social dislocation, a revolt of active workers — artisans, traders, farmers — who have enough of paying for wastage of public money," Mr. Madelin told TFI Television.

He said it was unjust that public sector workers pay 37.5 years of contributions for a pension and others 40 years. He added he hoped his resignation might give a push to reforms.

Unions and leftist opposition parties, who welcomed Mr. Madelin's abrupt resignation, predicted the government would face future crises in reconciling its twin priorities of job creation and budget curbs.

THE Daily Crossword by Gregory E. Paul

ACROSS

- Jabbered
- Sports group
- Catch flies
- Get the lead out
- Arm bone
- Throw
- Buenos —
- Weather word
- Palo — CA
- Tchrs. gp.
- Triple Crown horse
- A Scott
- Nun's wear
- Contribution
- Diviner
- Part of T.S.E.
- Dudley or Demi
- Scul
- Shopping center
- Borge's instrument
- Sound of contentment
- Give — whirl
- Potato pancake
- Game of chance
- Bank employee
- Chanticleer
- Houston player
- Bakery unit
- Triple Crown horse
- At a small price
- "God's Little —"
- "the Mood for Love"
- Loyal subject to a monarch
- Herring
- Synthesizer man
- Movie critic
- Bindlesiff
- Thrill of yore
- Entrances

DOWN

- Pirate Lafitte
- Perer Luyendyk
- Triple Crown horse
- Natives of: abbr.
- Creme Suzette, e.g.
- Rock deposits
- City in Israel
- Baker or Bryant
- SC county
- Cascade peak
- Ship's frame
- Funny Johnson
- Ames and Asner
- Ireland
- Cheer
- Pardon
- Fill with joy
- Radiale
- Triple Crown horse
- Sweater size
- Trial's partner
- Former acom
- Doozy
- Like a substitute
- Gallio's birthplace
- majesty
- Illegal liquor
- Texas city
- Wave: Sp.
- fuzz (mixed drink)
- Heavenly hunter
- Cummerbund
- Canyon sound
- Hermit, for one
- U.S. playwright
- Fabled giant
- Dampens
- Coach of Fame
- coach, Hank

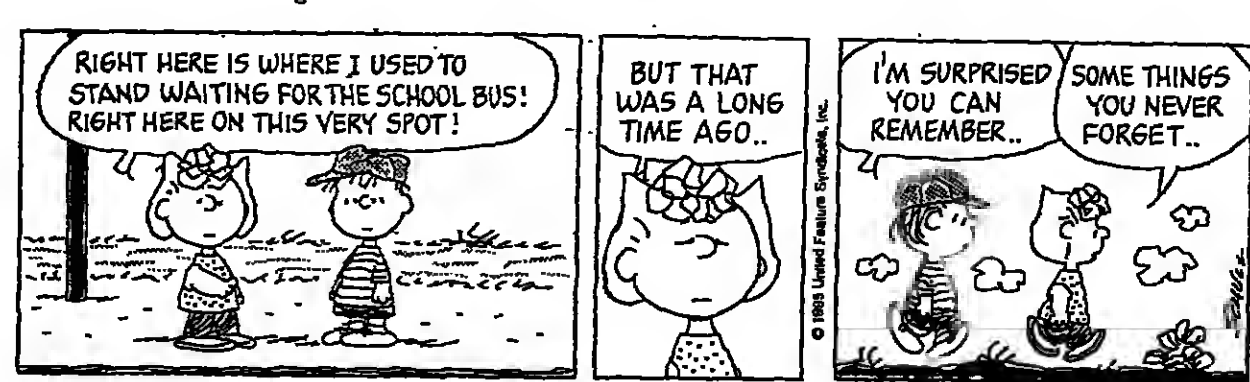
Yesterday's puzzle solved:

VISTA	CROP	GROG
OCEAN	HOOR	RATA
TERREHAUTE	ANTI	
ERA	MIST	TENDON
SAVANT	GENEROUS	
CRONE	GRAS	ARNO
ADIT	ARISE	PAID
LOLA	BETH	DITTO
PREMISES	REDEEM	
ODOR	CUSS	
OPENER	SLIT	GAD
RAVI	BATONROUGE	
ALEC	ELAN	ORRIN
LENA	DIRE	YOUNG

THE BETTER HALF By Glasbergen



Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n' Jeff



JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

ROBEW
MHEAR
EDGERD
AFACED

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer: "OCTOBER"

Yesterday's Jumbles: LIMBO TOOTH PENURY BESIDE
Answer: How they learned to crush grapes — ONE STEP AT A TIME

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Mike Argenton

Perfect This is just the beginning

WHAT THE SUCCESSFUL COUNTERFEIT ARTIST DID

HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR MONDAY, AUGUST 28, 1995

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll, Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) A bigwig you know could help you substantially today so do not hesitate to accept favours you need.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Study into whatever will make your home run more smoothly today and plan to buy the right mechanisms. Invite guests in for the evening.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) This is a good day to contact regular allies and to discuss your plans this evening and gain their cooperation for them.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You want to do some investigating, but talk it over with a close tie first; get as much data from experts as you can.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Communicating well so that you gain your finest wishes is wise today. Get together with blog good friends for some adventures.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Sit in the quiet of your study today and consider your finest ambitions and how best you can gain them. Show you are devoted.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Contact that good friend who can tell you what is best to do in order to gain your finest aims today. Plan the activities of tonight well.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Contact the most prominent person you know today who can assist you most with your career, and gain the support you need.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) If you contact an expert in your field of endeavours, you can make far greater progress this evening.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) A talk with a clever business person today can bring you good ideas on how to become more prosperous tonight.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Being with regular allies can open new doors of opportunity for you and them today by exchanging good ideas.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Apply more thought and effort today, and you can make your environment more charming and healthy clean.

Birthstone of August: Peridot — Golden Quartz

business daily beat
A review of economic news from the Arabic press

Ministry flushes out highly-paid employees

IN ORDER to flush out the employees who earn more than JD6,000 a year, the Ministry of Supply has officially written to all the ministries and departments and obtained lists of names of all industrialists and owners of commercial entities from the chambers of industry and commerce. The ministry also went after the names of real estate owners and wrote to universities and colleges to obtain names of staff who do not qualify to receive food subsidies. Even banks were asked to provide information in addition to a general survey by the ministry to identify people who should be excluded from subsidy lists. Supply Minister Adel Qudah said at a press conference that the ministry has obtained the national identification number for the citizens and work is progressing at an intensive pace. He expected the work to be completed in two months and noted that the number of beneficiaries from food subsidies could be cut by 150,000 families leaving only 500,000 families to benefit from food coupons.

Mr. Qudah said the ministry was intensifying its inspections in the market to ensure merchants are abiding by the fixed prices. He revealed that during the first seven months of this year, the ministry issued 16,115 violation tickets compared to 14,146 violation tickets issued during the whole of last year.

The minister pointed out that the bread subsidy costs the treasury more than JD 75 million as the Kingdom consumes about 650,000 tonnes of wheat now costing \$230 (JD 161) per tonne including transportation and storage as well as other handling expenses. The ministry's subsidy for sugar amounts to JD 200 per tonne, the minister said, noting that the price per tonne including transportation, storage and other expenses has reached \$500 (JD 350). As such, the kilogram of sugar selling at JD 0.250 at the subsidised price has an actual cost of JD 0.350. During the past seven months, the ministry sold 72,000 tonnes of the subsidised price and 97,000 tonnes at the free price. As for rice, the cost per tonne including all charges reaches JD 340. The ministry sells the tonne for JD 130 at the subsidised price, taking into consideration that the volume sold between January and July of this year amounted to 70,000 tonnes with only 18,000 tonnes selling at the free price. Milk, costing \$38 per carton sells at \$35 at the subsidised price under which 714,000 cartons were sold while 14,000 cartons were sold at the free price.

Mr. Qudah said the Kingdom's annual consumption of barley amounts to 600,000 tonnes of which 200,000 tonnes is secured from Syria and the rest is purchased from international markets. He pointed out that locally produced barley is subsidised at JD 40 per tonne. Yellow corn costs the ministry JD 120 per tonne but 310,000 tonnes are at JD 116 per tonne every year.

With such subsidies, the minister expects a total figure of JD 96 million, more than the figure allocated for in the 1995 budget. However, he added the difference will be covered by the treasury.

Mr. Qudah outlined to the journalists the projects that his ministry was undertaking. He mentioned expanding the silos in Irbid and mechanising the silos in Russeifa. Tenders were also floated to build supply complexes, with a capacity of 8,000 tonnes each, at Jerash, Ghor Al Safi, Al Kafreio, Madaba, Ruweished, Ajloun, northern Ghor, Deir Alla, Mafrqa and Maan. Expansion of refrigerators at Balqa, Jerash and Mafrqa was also being processed. (Al Ra'i, Al Aswaq).

Oman to launch petrochemical project in two months

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The Gulf state of Oman will begin measures to build a major petrochemical complex in the next two months followed by a multi-billion-dollar gas liquefaction project, an Omani minister was quoted as saying.

Mohammad Ibn Musa Al Yusuf, minister of state for development affairs, said the petrochemical project would cost around \$700 million and would be run by the private sector as part of economic reforms.

"The project will be managed by the private sector while the government will benefit from selling gas to it. Executive measures for the project will start within two months," he told the United Arab Emirates daily Al Itihad.

Mr. Yusuf did not provide details of the project, which would be Oman's first petrochemical plant. He also did not make clear if foreign investors would be allowed to contribute to the project.

Another key venture involves an LNG plant with a production capacity of six million tonnes per year. Its costs are estimated at \$9 billion, to be borrowed from local and international banks, Mr. Yusuf said.

"Financing for the LNG project is available as banks are ready to extend loans. Such loans would be pro-

vided over a period of four years and repayment would come from the project's revenues between 1999 and 2004," he said.

He said the LNG venture had a priority over a project to supply India with natural gas through an underwater pipeline that could cost around \$5 billion. But he added "this project will see light as well."

Oman, a non-OPEC oil producer with an output of around 840,000 barrels per day, has launched reforms to cushion the impact of weak crude prices and give its private sector a greater role in domestic development.

Several other projects involving electricity, sewage, industry and farming would be carried out in participation with the private sector, which now accounts for nearly 40 per cent of the gross domestic product.

Mr. Yusuf said such enterprises, coupled with ongoing reforms and cuts in state expenditure, would help the government in wiping out its budget deficit. But he ruled out the imposition of fresh income taxes in the near future.

"There are no plans to increase taxes on profits within the next five years. Instead, the government will work to encourage the private sector to upgrade productivity and boost exports."

Iraq, debt concerns take shine off Kuwait stocks

KUWAIT (RI) — Fresh tension over Iraq and looming repayments of bad debt have slowed activity on Kuwait's stock exchange following a 26 per cent rise in share values since January that made it the Gulf's most buoyant exchange.

Economists say security jitters over Iraq and the prospect of a gradual sell-off by investors repaying debt has depressed Kuwaiti stock exchange volume and could keep a lid on prices.

"The level of turbulence in the region makes many wonder what will come next. Even if (Iraq President) Saddam Hussein goes, can you

predict who his successor will be or say whether he will take power peacefully? a commercial banker said.

He was referring to heightened tension between the United States and Iraq after President Saddam's two consular, including the mastermind of Iraq's military industries, defected to Jordan with their families on Aug. 8.

The men have called for President Saddam's overthrow and the United States has moved more forces into the region as a precaution.

"The market might be steady for now but you will probably see a decline (in values)," said economist

Abdul Aziz Al Sultan.

"People in the debt programme will sell assets gradually (to fund repayments), and people who are not in the programme will react to that by worrying about a decline in prices and selling off some of their assets in turn," he pointed out.

The \$20 million in dubious loans, the economy's thorniest problem, stem from the 1982 crash of an unofficial bourse and from commercial losses from Iraq's 1990-91 occupation of Kuwait.

Investors who had rushed to buy stocks all year took a breather after parliament on

Aug. 16 approved a bill granting easier terms for the bad debt. Many investors sat back to study the implications of the law's complex terms for each stock.

The week after the parliament voted, daily average volume dropped 37 per cent to 39 million and daily average value traded slumped 33 per cent to 7.2 million dinars (\$24 million).

Share prices have held up, however, bearing out predictions that the new easier terms will not require a fire-sale of assets by debtors. The price index finished on Saturday at 1,252, a record high

and up 1.5 per cent from Aug. 16.

Volume had soared between January and August, with demand fuelled by a spate of privatisations and hopes for a solution to the 13-year-old wrangle over how to settle the bad loans owed by 10,000 individual and corporate borrowers.

The original settlement terms would have required some debtors to settle 2.3 billion dinars (\$7.6 billion by Sept. 6). Now they have five years to repay, with a first tranche of 400 million dinars (\$1.3 billion) payable by Dec. 6.

Moroccan elected to head African Development Bank

ABIDJAN (R) — The African Development Bank has finally elected a new president, raising hopes that its AAA credit rating is safe and long-delayed reforms of its management and loans portfolio can get under way.

Omar Kabbaj, a former adviser in the Moroccan prime minister's office, eventually won after nine rounds of voting and negotiations in Ivory Coast on Friday and Saturday, and five rounds of voting in Nigeria in May.

But though financially sound, the bank is riven by political fighting and accusations of bad management and corruption.

Credit rating agency Standard and Poor's put the bank on credit watch in June, citing the failure to elect a president, and concern about relations between regional and non-regional shareholders.

"The bank has some problems, I recognise that. I'm not maybe aware of the extent, I'll do that when I take up my duties," Mr. Kabbaj told reporters after his election.

He said he planned to get an independent consultant to audit the various recent studies of the bank's management and loans policy and draw up a reform programme, which would be submitted to members for consultation then approved by the governors.

"I think this step is needed if we want to give the necessary signal to our members and to the markets," he said.

The diminutive, cigar-smoking Kabbaj said another priority would be admitting South Africa, which had hoped to join at the Abidjan meeting but sent its application at the last minute.

Bank sources say South Africa, sub-Saharan Africa's biggest economy, will be able to borrow \$200 to \$300 million a year on favourable terms once it joins the bank.

Mr. Kabbaj's election means negotiations can resume on the pressing problem of the bank's African Development Fund, which normally leads \$1 billion a year on easy terms to the poorest countries but has not been replenished since the end of 1993.

Mr. Kabbaj, 53, is a former minister delegate for economic affairs at the Moroccan prime minister's office. He spent 13 years on the executive board of the International Monetary Fund.

Support for the three candidates for the presidency was deeply split into regional factions and between the bank's African and non-African members.

Timothy Thahane of Lesotho, who had led the overall vote since the beginning, never managed to gather the necessary majority of African votes. Two-thirds of the bank's shares are held by African countries.

The impasse was finally resolved in round eight when Nigeria, the bank's biggest shareholder with 10.287 per cent, withdrew its candidate.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET									
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SIKRISANI									
TELEPHONE: 607111 / 607179									
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 27/08/1995									
COMPANY'S NAME	NO. OF SHARES TRADED	VALUE TRADED	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	NEW CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE	INDEX NUMBER	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	NEW CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE
ARAB BANK P.C.	380	84305	221.000	222.500	+1.500	126.96	126.96	126.96	0.024
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	3037	12665	4.530	4.500	-0.030	126.96	126.96	126.96	0.024
BANK OF JORDAN	3503	11905	3.410	3.400	-0.010	126.96	126.96	126.96	0.024
MIDDLE EAST INVESTMENT BANK	6050	7273	1.200	1.210	+0.010	126.96	126.96	126.96	0.024
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	2170	5424	2.520	2.500	-0.020	126.96	126.96	126.96	0.024
THE HOUSING BANK	1624	9303	5.650	5.740	+0.090	126.96	126.96	126.96	0.024
JORDAN EQUITY BANK	656	1943	2.780	2.790	+0.010	126.96	126.96	126.96	0.024
JORDAN GULF BANK	1550	767	1.160	1.140	-0.020	126.96	126.96	126.96	0.024
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	1173	4223	3.570	3.770	+0.200	126.96	126.96	126.96	0.024
SWEDISH BANK	3050	13804	3.870	3.870	0.000	126.96	126.96	126.96	0.024
JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	1600	6519	4.100	4.050	-0.050	126.96	126.96	126.96	0.024
AMMAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	16700	17136	1.040	1.020	-0.020	126.96	126.96	126.96	0.024
ARAB BANKING CORPORATION/JORDAN	800	4360	5.400	5.450	+0.050	126.96	126.96	126.96	0.024
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK	6000	9403	1.570	1.570	0.000	126.96	126.96	126.96	0.024
BANKS SECTOR	48335	189245	INDEX NUMBER	183.06	CHANGE	+0.552			
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER	32300	52500	1.610	1.630	+0.020	126.96	126.96	126.96	0.024
JORDAN HOTEL & TOURISM	406	3370	8.450	8.300	-0.150	126.96	126.96	126.96	0.024
JORDAN NATIONAL SHIPPING LINES	100	277	2.810	2.770	-0.040	126.96	126.96	126.96	0.024
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	1110	25260	2.280	2.150	-0.130	126.96	126.96	126.96	0.024
JORDAN PRESS FOUNDATION / ALRAI	1154	11387	9.850	9.850	0.000	126.96	126.96	126.96	0.024
ARAB INTER. FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	1800	5778	3.210	3.210	0.000	126.96	126.96	126.96	0.024
JARBA PRIVATE UNIVERSITY	5180	6951	1.350	1.340	-0.010	126.96	126.96	126.96	0.024
SERVICES SECTOR	48074	95547	INDEX NUMBER	126.46	CHANGE	+0.024			
ATTANQUEER CONST. MATERIAL MANUFACTURING	1000	1200	1.190	1.200	+0.010	126.96	126.96	126.96	0.024
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	5150	18969	3.690	3.690	0.000	126.96	126.96	126.96	0.024
THE ARAS POZAN	1000	5000	5.000	5.000	0.000	126.96	126.96	126.96	0.024
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	239	2257	9.500	9.450	-0.050	126.96	126.96	126.96	0.024
THE JORDAN MONSTRO MILLS	1450	11078	7.640	7.640	0.000	126.96	126.96	126.96	0.024
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	3344	16553	5.010	5.040	+0.030	126.96	126.96	126.96	0.024
THE JORDAN PAPER MANUFACTURING	600	3517	5.850	5.850	0.000	126.96	126.96	126.96	0.024
THE PUBLIC MINTING	111	333	3.030	3.030	0.000	126.96	126.96	126.96	0.024
SPINNING & WEAVING	300	594	1.970	1.980	+0.010	126.96	126.96	126.96	0.024
DAR AL DAMA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	1050	8001	7.620	7.620	0.000	126.96	126.96	126.96	0.024
ARAB ALUMINIUM INDUSTRY	400	4873	5.400	5.400	0.000	126.96	126.96	126.96	0.024
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	21250	10333	4.990	4.990	0.000	126.96	126.96	126.96	0.024
ARAB PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING	1425	1966	1.380	1.380	0.000	126.96	126.96	126.96	0.024
NATIONAL INDUSTRIES	16950	17520	2.020	2.040	+0.020	126.96	126.96	126.96	0.024
INTERMEDIATE PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	250	513	2.070	2.050	-0.020	126.96	126.96	126.96	0.024
JORDAN WOODPULP INDUSTRIES	250	277	1.080	1.080	0.000	126.96	126.96	126.96	0.024
UNIVERSAL CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	500	1754	3.550	3.500	-0.050	126.96	126.96	126.96	0.024
NATIONAL CABLE & WIRE MANUFACTURING	250	1175	4.750	4.700	-0.050	126.96	126.96	126.96	0.024
JORDAN POLYMER-CHEMICALS	250	388	1.530	1.550	+0.020	126.96	126.96	126.96	0.024
ARAB CENTER FOR PHARM. & CHEMICALS	200	435	2.170	2.180	+0.010	126.96	126.96	126.96	0.024
UNIVERSAL & POLYMER	1650	5371	3.240	3.270	+0.030	126.96	126.96	126.96	0.024
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES CO.	12625	25973	2.030	2.030	0.000	126.96	126.96	126.96	0.024
JORDAN NEW CABLE COMPANY	5900	9974	1.710	1.690	-0.020	126.96	126.96	126.96	0.024
INTERNATIONAL TOBACCO & CIGARETTES	36000	49394	1.360	1.360	0.000	126.96	126.96	126.96	0.024
UNION CIGARET & VEGETABLE OIL INDUSTRIES	13850	28376	2.050	2.040	-0.010	126.96	126.96	126.96	0.024
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR	126859	220869	INDEX NUMBER	126.96	CHANGE	+0.024			
GRAND TOTAL	223268	505661	INDEX NUMBER	155.18	CHANGE	+0.312			
NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET 147033									
VALUE TRADED IN PARALLEL MARKET 137281									

Foreign Exchange Market Summary (August 21-August 25, 1995)

AMMAN — The U.S. unit witnessed modest losses against other major currencies last week. It ended the week 0.81 per cent lower against the yen, 0.30 per cent lower against the mark, and 0.62 per cent lower against sterling.

The dollar rose marginally against the yen and the mark Monday, while depreciating modestly against the yen. Reports indicated that the dollar traded in narrow ranges as traders awaited the meetings of the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) the next day and the Bundesbank Council on Thursday.

The U.S. unit continued its appreciation against sterling and the mark Tuesday, while stabilising against the yen. The dollar's rise came after the FOMC decision to leave its monetary policy unchanged. Analysts indicated the move came as a result of the Fed's satisfaction with the performance of the U.S. economy, which seems to be rebounding following its sluggishness during the first half of the year.

In the meantime, reports indicated that traders were waiting for Bundesbank meeting results on Thursday. Reports also indicated that there were increased expectations that the Bundesbank might lower German interest rates during that meeting. Comments from Bundesbank officials and German economic data released recently supported these expectations.

The dollar depreciated against other major currencies Wednesday, however. Meanwhile, the Bundesbank trimmed its repurchase rate by six basis points to 4.39 per cent. The dollar continued its depreciation against other major currencies Thursday, despite a Bundesbank monetary easing. The Bundesbank lowered its discount and Lombard rates by 0.5 per cent to 3.5 per cent and 5.5 per cent respectively. The dollar was reported to have appreciated against other major currencies in response to the Bundesbank move, but the release of the U.S. durable goods report, showing a decline of 1.7 per cent in July, compared to a decline of 0.3 per cent during the previous month, triggered a dollar sell-off, and limited its rise.

The dollar rose marginally against the yen, while retreating against the mark and sterling at the end of the week. Reports indicated that the dollar's decline against the mark came in view of traders' reaction to the resignation of France's finance minister, which triggered increased demand for the mark as a safe-haven currency.

The U.S. unit, thus ended the week at 1.4708 marks, 96.65 yen and at \$1.5505 to sterling.

New York Closing Rates for Major Currencies Against the U.S. Dollar

Currency	Friday August 18 - 1995	Friday August 25 - 1995	Percent Change
Sterling Pound*	1.5410	1.5505	0.62 %
Deutsche Mark	1.4752	1.4708	0.30 %
Swiss Franc	1.2233	1.2090	1.18 %
French Franc	5.0555	5.0740	(0.36) %
Japanese Yen	97.43	96.65	0.81 %

* USD per STG

Euro-Currency Interest Rates*

Currency	1-Month (%)	1-Year (%)	1-Month (%)	1-Year (%)
U.S. Dollar	5.81	5.87	5.81	5.81
Sterling Pound	6.56	6.94	6.62	6.94
Deutsche Mark	4.31	4.27	4.19	4.25
Swiss Franc	2.87	2.93	2.80	2.75
French Franc	5.87	5.81	5.63	5.53
Japanese Yen	0.87	1.00	0.87	0.81

U.S. OPEN PREVIEW

Seles seeks 3rd U.S. Open in comeback; Agassi favourite

NEW YORK (AP) — Monica Seles won the last two U.S. Opens she played before she was stabbed in 1993, and the way she looks now she's the favourite to win it a third time when play begins on Monday.

Rare is the athlete who returns from a long layoff as good as ever straight from the start. Rarer still is one who comes back better, the way the two-inch (5.1 cms) taller Seles appears to be with a bigger serve and more confident volleys.

Seles began her comeback by winning the Canadian Open last week as easily as she ever won any tournament. The U.S. Open, a two-week grind, will be tougher. But barring a flareup of the tendinitis in her left knee, or any new injury, she has the talent and the draw to win her ninth Grand Slam title.

"The first time back, it's unrealistic," Seles said as she sought to take the pressure off herself. "It doesn't matter. If I play well, that's great."

It'll be a boon for tennis just to have her back in the Open, playing in it for the first time as an American citizen.

Two-time men's champion Pete Sampras, seeded second behind defending champion Andre Agassi, was impressed by Seles' cruise in the Canadian.

"It certainly wouldn't happen in the men's game, that's for sure," Sampras said. "But to come back after 2½ years and really dominate... I saw some of the scores up there and she seemed like she never really left the tour. That is pretty unbelievable, to be that match-tough so quickly, first tournament back. I mean, she is killing everyone. That is an indication of how much better she is than the rest of the girls."

A year ago, Sampras got knocked out of the open in the fourth round by Jaime Yzaga after a one-month layoff due to injury. Sampras worked out hard on a bike during his absence, practised as much as he could, but still wasn't "match-tough." None of the men, Sampras said,



Monica Seles

could come back from a much longer layoff and win right away as Seles did.

"I mean, you are out for two years, you come back, and to win a final one and love, that is pretty much impossible," Sampras said. "If I was out for two years and came back, who is to say if I could get through the qualifier? It is a whole different game."

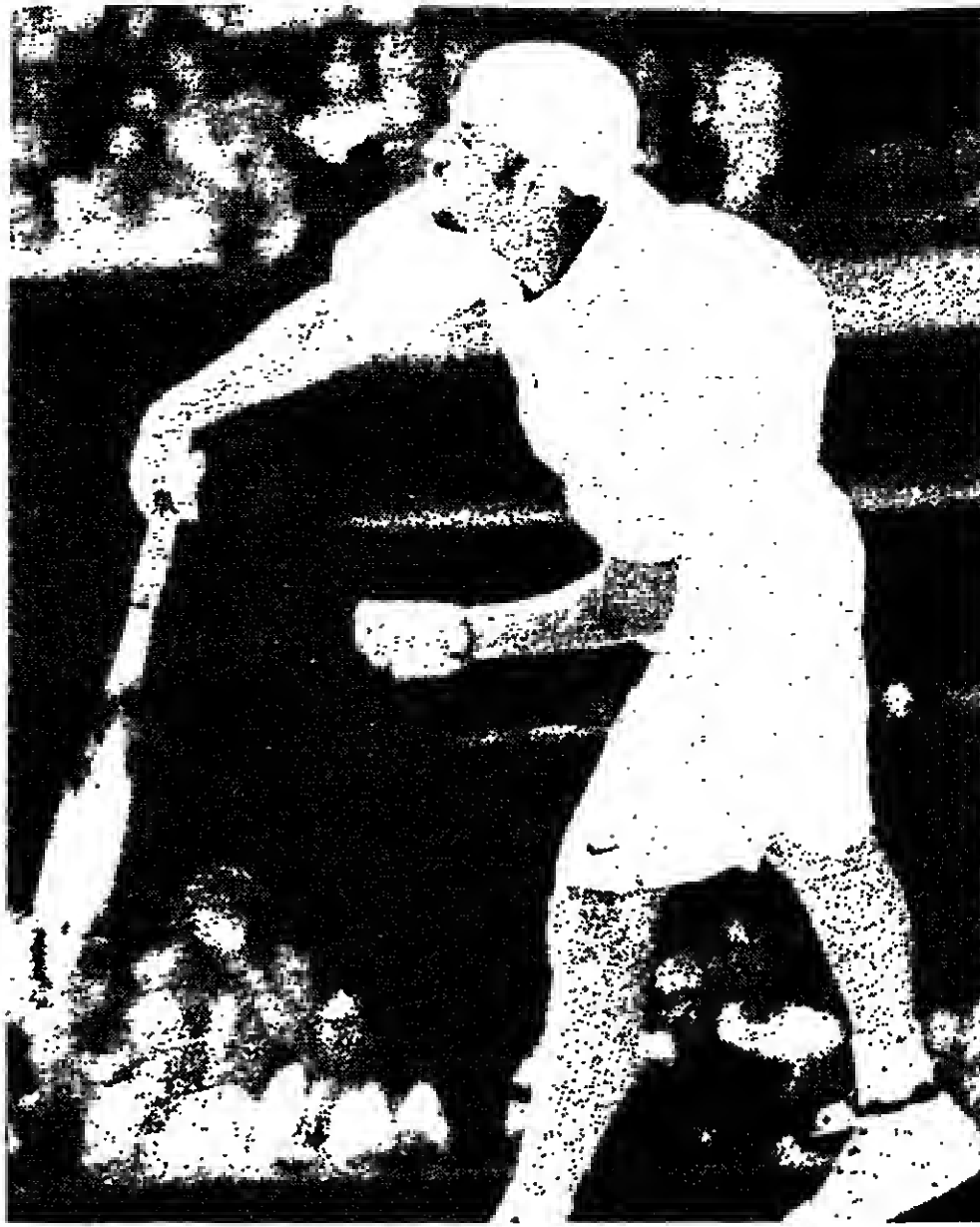
Sampras cited the comeback of Mats Wilander, winner of three Grand Slam titles

in 1988, who took off most of three years before playing his first full season again last year.

"It wasn't like he was contending for major titles," Sampras said. "The top four, five girls are so much better than the rest. It's a joke. I mean, really, those girls are winning their matches two and love, one and one. That is unheard of in the men's game. She and Graf and the rest of the top five or 10 are so much better than someone

ranked 20. It seems like those girls really don't start playing their best tennis until the quarterfinals or semifinals, because the first four matches are kind of like a consolation, kind of like a qualifying for them. That is the way it is in the ladies game."

The difference in ability between the top five players — Graf, Seles, Arantxa Sanchez Vicario, Conchita Martinez, Jana Novotna and Mary Pierce — and the rest of the field is wide.



World No. 1 Andre Agassi

And for this tournament, Graf is a questionable contender with her mind on the tax charges against her father in Germany, her back suspect and her confidence perhaps down. Graf also has a very tough draw, starting with Amanda Coetzer, who beat her in the first round in Canada. If Graf gets to the quarterfinals, she could face Pierce, the Australian Open champion, with the winner likely to play Sanchez Vicario in the semis. Seles, seeded

second, has a much easier draw to the final.

But for all the depth of the men's draw — any of the top 100 players could beat the highest-ranked men on a given day — even Sampras acknowledges that, just like the women, there are only five or six who truly would be considered contenders. And that's being generous.

Agassi and Sampras have so thoroughly dominated the men's game that it would be a surprise if they didn't meet in

the final. The third-seeded player, French Open champion Thomas Muster, prepared for this hardcourt event by playing on clay in Croatia and would be lucky to get past the quarters.

Boris Becker, the No. 4 seed and 1989 champion, reached the Wimbledon final but hasn't gone beyond the fourth round at the U.S. Open since 1990. This surface doesn't suit him nearly as well as grass.

Kafelnikov, Siemerink advance to Hamlet Cup final

COMMACK, New York (R) — Top-seed Yevgeny Kafelnikov of Russia beat Switzerland's Mark Rosset for the first time in six meetings on Saturday to reach the final of the Hamlet Cup.

Kafelnikov will meet unseeded Jan Siemerink of the Netherlands who beat Renzo Furlan of Italy 6-4, 6-3.

Rosset came back from a 2-5 deficit to force a tie-break, but Kafelnikov recovered to win the final three points and then opened the second set by breaking Rosset's serve.

"I don't think I would have won the match if I'd lost the first set," Kafelnikov said. "I would've been too worn out physically and mentally. Once I won that set, I was very confident and thought that I'd win the second set. This gives me confidence going into the U.S. Open."

Kafelnikov raised his record for the year to 58-20 and will be the seventh seed at the U.S. Open.

Siemerink, who beat Boris Becker three weeks ago in Cincinnati, won his lone career singles title in Singapore in 1991, but is in his second final. In four weeks, last month he reached the final on clay at Amsterdam.

Siemerink's serve-and-volley attack was too much for Furlan, taking just 70 minutes to pick up his third consecutive straight-set victory.

Siemerink also upset second-seeded Wayne Ferreira in the first round in three sets.

Champions shrouded in early-season doubt

LONDON (AFP) — Blackburn go into battle against their fiercest rivals Manchester United on Monday with clouds of doubt already hovering over Ewood Park. The champions shrugged aside the criticism of another

methodical, if uninspiring, display after their unconvincing opening-day win over QPR last Saturday.

But consecutive 2-1 defeats at Sheffield Wednesday and Bolton mean Ray Harford's men have already lost as

many Premiership matches in the opening week of the new campaign as they did in the first six months last term.

And with United having recovered from their 3-1 loss at Aston Villa to record wins over West Ham and Wimbledon and end any talk of an Old Trafford crisis, the pressure has doubled in intensity on Harford.

Against Bolton, despite the efforts of Tim Sherwood and David Batty in midfield and plenty of possession, Rovers simply failed to look the part in any way.

Alan Shearer had one of his quietest games in a Blackburn shirt, there was a decided lack of penetration down the flanks — the hallmark of their success last term — and calamitous defensive errors cost them dear.

The defeat was, in fact, Blackburn's sixth in their last nine games — including the Charity Shield — going back

to the last five matches of last term when they crawled over the championship finish line ahead of United by a short head.

Harford maintained: "We don't have to wind up our players at all for any game. They're all professionals." But the manager is all too aware that his side cannot afford the errors that have cost them so dear in the last two matches.

"We've conceded four goals in two games through not very good defending," he said. "We have to have a look at the injuries and knocks and prepare again."

"We'll see how we react. You can't say anything about the game before it starts. It's another game and it depends on how they come and play."

With Jeff Kenna still out with an ankle injury and Kevin Gallacher's hamstringing expected to rule him out again, Harford is likely to

stick with the side which disappointed at Burnley Park.

"We didn't break them down enough and then gave away a goal at the end again, just like we did at Hillsborough," said the manager.

"Perhaps it's better for the defenders when they have to work hard. When they have to defend for long spells they get better."

"In a lot of games last year we were defending a lot and they got better because they had a lot of work. In the games we've lost they haven't had much to do."

Platt needs time to ease back into British ways

David Platt, back from Italy in a £4.75 million (\$7 million) deal as one of the major signings at Arsenal, has had a disappointing start to the Premiership campaign.

The England captain has been beset by injuries in the pre-season build-up and is struggling to come to terms again with the fierce pace of the English game.

His goal at Everton last Wednesday was a reminder of what he can do, but he followed a poor opening-day performance against Middlesbrough with another in Arsenal's goalless draw at Coventry on Saturday.

And he admitted: "I know I've got more work to do yet before I'm at full steam."

"The game is very fast here, much different to the pace in Italy and that is not a surprise to me, but the expectation is so high, probably because of all the foreign stars coming here, the big money in the transfer market and the prospect of the European Championship finals here at the end of the season."

"Everybody is flying and my preparation has been a bit

stop-start, but you will have to expect a few differences in me. I think I have become more tactically aware and although I'll always want to get forward on the end of things and take a risk, I've learned not to go bombing in when the odds are 80-20 against me."

"When I've had more time on the training ground with the lads, I'll be better. We are all getting better as we go along and the important thing is that we are still unbeaten."

"When the players have got more used to the touches of Dennis Bergkamp and learn more about the way

Bruce Riech wants us to play you will see things happen. I spoke to Gary Linaker, and he warned me, from his experience when he came back from Spain, that it probably takes six or seven games before your reactions become attuned again to the pace here. And now it is even faster."

The Gunners defence was also fiercely resilient in a match of five bookings and new boss Riech said: "I've inherited that quality at the club. This was a battling performance and we had to show a lot of grit and determination."

"Our passing, particularly the speed of it, has to get a lot better and it will, but after two clean sheets in three games I'm reasonably happy."

Barnes back to his best

John Barnes is dazzling again, with a newfound lease of life and no lack of inventive spirit, as Liverpool's 3-1 mugging of Spurs showed on Saturday.

The much-criticised England player scored a sensational 'hat-trick' at Spurs and then insisted: "I'll sweat blood to be a winner this season."

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♣ Q 9 2	♣ 7 6

WEST: ♠ K 9 5 3 2, ♥ Q 8 6 5, ♦ Q J 9 7, ♣ A K 4

SOUTH: ♠ A Q 6, ♥ Q 7, ♦ A J 10 8 5 3, ♣ Q 6 3

The bidding: SOUTH 1♣, WEST 1♥, NORTH 1♠, EAST Pass

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Basketball, swimming officials probe unsportsmanlike incidents

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Basketball and swimming events in the country have been temporarily suspended pending investigations by the respective federations following unsportsmanlike incidents which marred competition during the last week.

Following the suspension of the Ahli-Orthodox Under-22 final round basketball match on Aug. 22 when fans and players of both teams broke into a riot at Al Ahli court, swimming competitions were put on hold Sunday after referees announced they were pulling out until the Jordan Swimming Federation (JSF) takes the decision to bar Al Orthodox's swimmer Osama Al Halman who had attacked a referee earlier in the week.

So far, the JSF has not taken any decision regarding the swimmer whose club insisted that he continue his participation in the week-long event. Al Orthodox were in the overall lead with 1637 points in the five-club event which has witnessed the toughest competition in years with 10 national records broken.

As for the Jordan Basketball Federation (JBF), it meets today (Monday) to reschedule U-22 and women's championship matches which were postponed when Al Orthodox announced they were pulling out of all JBF activities.

Al Orthodox Club's representative at the JBF's fact-finding committee had failed to show up for a meeting Saturday.

JBF Chairman Awwad Haddad said the federation would take the appropriate measures against the players who instigated the fight in its regular meeting Monday and said he hoped another meeting of the committee will have addressed the problems Tuesday.

Al Orthodox's player Mustafa Al Ghoul had attacked the referee during the match. Moments later his teammate Ihab Maib kicked Al Ahli's Faisal Nsour. Things went out of control from that moment on and players from both teams got entangled in a fight which JBF officials, referees and Ahli club officials tried to stop. Fans from both sides left the stands and descended on Al Ahli's court which, for two minutes, became a battlefield, helped by total absence of policemen.

The match was halted when Al Ahli were leading 66-57, with 10'45" remaining in the second half. Orthodox's head coach Murad Barakat told the referees he was pulling his team out because policemen failed to show up and two of his players had to be taken to hospital.

Al Ahli, needed to win by any score to secure the title, while Al Orthodox needed a 24-point win to keep their title hopes alive.



Attila Czene of Hungary swims the backstroke on his way to clock the best time in men's 200m final at the European Swimming Championships Sunday (AFP photo)

European Swimming Championships

Russian trio in command; Franzi takes 5th gold

VIENNA (R) — Denis Pankratov, butterfly swimmer supreme, led a golden Russian spree at the European Championships on Saturday.

Pankratov and fellow world champions Alexander Popov and Vladimir Selkov each completed individual title doubles as Russia swept all three men's golds on the penultimate day of the championships.

Franziska Van Almsick scooped her fifth gold of the week with a superb anchor leg in the women's 4x100 metres medley relay and fellow German Julia Jung, just 15, won the 800 metres freestyle.

Michelle Smith, silver medalist in Tuesday's 400 individual medley, brought Ireland their first gold in the 69-year history of the European Championships with a powerful performance in the women's 200 individual medley.

But all eyes were on Pankratov for the men's 200 metres butterfly final following his obliteration of the nine-year-old 100 butterfly world record on Wednesday.

The weather, though, had cooled considerably with a heavy downpour of rain in the early afternoon after the hot sunshine of the morning heats, making conditions less hospitable at the open-air Stadionbad pool.

Pankratov, masterly exponent of the newly developing 'submarine' technique in the opening phase of the race, took the first 200 metres under water and surfaced long after his rivals. He was well clear and inside his own world record schedule at the first turn in the 50-metre pool.

The Russian world champion, leaving his rivals for dead, swept home nearly three seconds ahead of the rest in one minute 56.34 seconds, 1.12 seconds outside the world mark he set in Canet, France, in June.

"It was unfortunately a bit

too cold for a world record today," Pankratov said.

"Pankratov doesn't give you a chance on the first length. You can't hold him," Poland's Konrad Galka, silver medalist in 1:59.50, said.

"Pankratov's style with the long phase under water means the future for butterfly swimming," German bronze medalist Chris-Carl Bremer said.

Popov was very bit as immaculate as his team mate, never appearing to hurry in the most frantic sprint of the programme and thoroughly outclassing the opposition in the 50 freestyle.

Vietor, in Thursday's 100 freestyle, Popov had no trouble completing the 50 and 100 double he also achieved at the 1992 Olympics, the 1993 Europeans and 1994 worlds.

He won in a championship record 22.25 seconds, way ahead of Christophe Kalfayan of France (22.63) — silver medalist for the second time — and Torsten Span-

neberg of Germany (22.66).

"More and more people are able to stay with me till 35 metres and then they decide to let me go," Popov said with a smile.

"We're all equal for 35 metres and then I don't know what happens."

Selkov matched Pankratov and Popov by adding the 100 backstroke crown to the 200 title he retained on Thursday, a twin task made easier by the absence of Olympic 200 and world 100 champion Martin Lopez-Zubero of Spain who was sidelined by a back injury.

Selkov, like Pankratov and Popov, was in a class of his own and forged away on the second length of the 100 to win in 55.48 seconds from Germany's Jirka Letzin (56.24) and Belgium's Stefan Maene (56.32).

With one day to go, the Russians lead the title table with 16 golds to 12 for Germany.

Jung just held off fast

finishing defending champion Jana Henke in a German one-two in the women's 800 freestyle, a welcome revival for Jung after she had finished a disappointing sixth behind Van Almsick in Thursday's 400 event.

"I felt lousy after the 400. I didn't want to swim anymore. I wanted to be home," she said. "I was afraid the same thing would happen in the 800 but my team mates built me up and it worked out well."

Van Almsick had to pull back a big deficit in the medley relay after Hungary had taken charge with a magnificent 1:00.93 opening backstroke leg from Olympic champion Kinszina Egervari and maintained the advantage in the breaststroke and butterfly.

But it was easily within Van Almsick's powers and her superb 54.10-second freestyle split gave the Germans victory by more than two seconds.

Maleeva, Rubin in finals

MAHWAH, New Jersey (R) — Bulgaria's Magdalena Maleeva, after Czech Jana Novotna quit with an injured toe, and Chandra Rubin, with a victory over Japan's Ai Sugiyama, advanced to the finals of the Pathmark Women's Classic tennis tournament.

Robin, ranked 16th in the world, beat the unseeded Sugiyama 2-6, 6-2, 6-3, Sugiyama, ranked 62nd, had upset top-seeded Conchita Martinez of Spain in the second round.

Novotna, fearful of aggravating a sprained toe, quit midway in a well-played semifinal match with Maleeva.

Maleeva, seeded third, sparked with her service return in an abbreviated 74-minute duel that ended 4-6, 4-3 with Novotna limping off the court for further treatment to the second toe of her right foot.

The 20-year-old Maleeva is seeking to duplicate the title earned here by her sister, Manuela Maleeva-Fragniere, in 1987.

"I'm disappointed because I thought I could win the tournament," said the second-seeded Novotna. "I was worried that I could make it worse by continuing. It was painful and I couldn't run."

Novotna said the injury first flared during a doubles match at Wimbledon this summer.

"I may have to ask for a one-day postponement if I am scheduled for a match Monday," said Novotna, who is seeded fifth at the U.S. Open. "Grand Slams are the most important thing and I want to be ready to play there."

Maleeva played quite well, constantly taking the offense against Novotna. "I was surprised at how

good she was considering that she has not played since the French Open," Novotna said. "Her returns will make her dangerous at the U.S. Open."

Maleeva rapped a blistering forehand service return winner to score a service break and pull even at 4-4 in the opening set. But Novotna broke back in the ninth game on an angled backhand service return and then held in the 10th.

In the second set, Maleeva moved to a 3-1 lead when Novotna double faulted in the fourth game. The Bulgarian player held to 4-1 on an ace and a backhand pass after two deuces. It was at this stage that Novotna signalled for a trainer and had her toe taped for support.

Novotna held in the sixth game and broke in the seventh to get back on serve before calling it a day.

Schumacher wins, Williams protest

SPA FRANCORCHAMPS, Belgium (AFP) — World Champion Michael Schumacher drove a "stupendous race" in his Benetton Renault to win Sunday's weather-plagued Belgian Grand Prix after starting 16th on the grid.

The tribute came from his championship rival Damon Hill — but Hill's Williams Renault team immediately protested against Schu-

macher, reportedly for dangerous driving when Hill was trying to pass him in mid-race.

Schumacher was disqualified after his win here last year because wear to a skid plate under his car was more than regulation limits, and Hill was given the win.

Despite praising his rival's general driving Sunday, Hill said barging into his car had been unacceptable.

Hill, slowed by unlucky tyre choices in the changeable conditions, overhauled Martin Brundle's Ligier Mugen Honda in the closing laps to force through into second place. After the race Hill said: "Sorry Martin, I have to have those points." The result, if upheld, will increase Schumacher's lead in this year's championship to 15 points over Hill.

Eddie Irvine in the Jordan

Peugeot and his pit crew had lucky escapes when spilled petrol ignited during a pit stop. The fire was extinguished almost instantly, but it recalled the more serious Benetton refuelling fire last year.

Schumacher's winning time for the 44 laps of the long, hilly Spa Francorchamps circuit was 1hr 36min 47.875 secs, at an average speed of 190.204 kph.

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CHEERS : A JORDANIAN, NOT AN AMERICAN SUCCESS STORY.

The Jordan Times Features Editor ran an article entitled: "Jordanians bite into junk food culture" Saturday, 26 August 1995.

The Editor had a recorded audience with Mr. Raja F. Halazon - the Chairman of TURINO Flatotel and Gastronomy Centres. It is regrettable that references to CHEERS, in certain instances, in the article are incorrect, and could be considered harmful to the CHEERS at TURINO image. The fact is that Mr. Halazon informed the Editor that "We are basically in contradiction with the culture of American fast food products - you know the US offers a B.A. degree in Hamburgerology, but that has nothing to do with what we offer at CHEERS". We offer highest quality chopped/minced pure beef burgers with no 'junk' additives. CHEERS has no relationship whatsoever to any American chain-the name happens to be that of a T.V. Series, that is completely unheard of in this part of the world. Our pizzas claim more taste than any American pizza, because of higher ratio / amount of quality mozzarella cheese used per ounce. The setting of CHEERS is for exclusive, yet affordable, fine cafe-dining definitely not a fast food joint. Admittedly, CHEERS at TURINO adopts a European influence, but with an Arab accent. This is the culture of TURINO: the Arab-Mediterranean culture of hospitality, gastronomy, and fine entertainment. The cultural effects are our own creation and bear no relationship to any other place anywhere in the world. We can proudly mention that we were asked to franchise the product for some investors residing outside of Jordan, who considered CHEERS as a new and attractive concept. The unintentional error of the Editor is the mention of cigarette advertising. Although two of our posters show celebrities smoking but nowhere do we advertise any product; and definitely not cigarettes- NEVER!! On the contrary, our posters herald pitch lines like this: "Expect to Win" "Eat and Tell" "We, met at CHEERS" "Quality only happens when you care to try your best" "CHEERS at TURINO is a simple small Jordanian success. No junk food - No junk telling - no junk food all! To the Readers: As for the American social intrusion - check what you wear, your computer, the TV news signal, the graphic design software, and then take a hubble-bubble 'sedative' to help you ponder about the conflict of cultures !!!

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U.S. renews Balkan initiative amid clouds

SARAJEVO (Agencies) — The United States relaunched its Balkan peace initiative on Sunday but diplomacy was overshadowed by threats of a military offensive by Croatia and a U.N. gamble to protect a Muslim enclave with air power alone.

A reconstituted U.S. team headed for Europe to press the peace plan, but officials admitted they faced a daunting task with only a slim chance of success.

"I do want to say here and now to all the parties that we think the coming week is potentially decisive," Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke, who heads the delegation, said in a television interview.

Mr. Holbrooke and fellow negotiators headed for Paris later in the day for talks Monday and Tuesday with the French government and the other members of the five-nation contact group of international mediators: Britain, Germany and Russia.

The U.S. delegation was also to meet Monday in Paris with Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic, then travel to Belgrade for what Mr. Holbrooke described as "key" talks with Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic to persuade him to use his influence over Serbs in Bosnia-Herzegovina to make peace.

"We're not going to make a major concession to get them to the table," Mr. Holbrooke said.

"They are the major obstacle to peace and Belgrade will have to make some very tough decisions in the weeks to come," he added.

The Bosnian Serbs have steadfastly rejected an international peace plan that would grant them 49 per cent of the territory of Bosnia.

with the remaining 51 per cent to remain under the control of the Muslim-Croat alliance headquartered in Sarajevo.

Mr. Holbrooke warned warring Serbs they could face massive North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) reprisals if they fail to accept peace.

"If this peace initiative does not get moving, dramatically moving in the next week or two, the consequences will be very adverse to the Serbian goals," he said.

"One way or another, NATO will be heavily involved," he warned, adding: "This is something that the Serbs would not want."

The U.S. initiative was set back on Aug. 19 when three envoys died in a road accident near the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo. Four new officials were appointed last Wednesday.

The deaths deflated the initiative's initial momentum and the effort to regain the pace was overshadowed by Croatia's renewed threat to win back its last Serb-held rebel enclave on its territory by force if necessary.

President Tudjman said Eastern Slavonia would be retaken within months from separatist Serbs who have held it since 1991. If negotiations failed to win the region, a new military offensive would do it, he said.

"We are faced with the task of liberating eastern Slavonia," Mr. Tudjman said in Zagreb on Saturday. "We will quite certainly do this in the coming months either by peaceful means or by a new (military offensive) storm."

Eastern Slavonia, bordering Serbia, is the last part of Croatia in Serb hands after an army assault in August routed rebel Serbs in most of the sprawling Krajina region.

Mr. Tudjman was showered with glory when he rode a "freedom train" across the reconquered territory on Saturday but he admitted that the region he passed through was a wasteland.

Feted by flag-waving Croatians shouting "Franjo, Franjo" along the 423-kilometre route, the train symbolised the reunification of Croatia after the stunning rout of minority insurgent Serbs.

"This is not just the liberation of land but the creation of a foundation for a free and independent Croatia for centuries to come," he said.

Mr. Tudjman, who emulates his one-time mentor, late Josef Tito, is all but sure to parlay Krajina's defeat into easy reelection next year.

Mr. Holbrooke's peace mission was also being overshadowed by a U.N. gamble to protect the Muslim "safe area" of Gorazde in eastern Bosnia from surrounding Serbs by air power alone.

British U.N. peacekeepers were due to send out a convoy with equipment on Sunday. Only about 80 British soldiers remain in Gorazde and they will be withdrawn this week.

The U.N. will count on the threat of air strikes and about two dozen unmanned observers and air controllers on the ground to keep the area, where 65,000 Muslims live, from being overrun.

Two nearby U.N. "safe areas," Srebrenica and Zepa, were overrun by the Serbs in July, sending thousands of refugees fleeing across Bosnia.



'BATTLE READY': American servicemen at work on the flight deck of the USS Abraham Lincoln, which is anchored in the northern Gulf of Persia "in high state of readiness" after what the U.S. described as unusual Iraqi military movements (see page one) (AFP photo)

Limit work to legal mandate, Hammad tells associations

'Leave politicking to political parties'

AMMAN (Petra) — Interior Minister Salameh Hammad on Sunday called on members of professional associations not to indulge in organising political meetings and to focus on developing their professions and interacting with other associations.

Speaking at a meeting attended by the ministers of health, public works and housing and justice and heads of professional associations, Mr. Hammad stressed the importance of respecting the laws governing public meetings and called on the associations not to organise such meetings "which usually have a political nature."

Professional associations were carrying out some political activities and the government was keeping silent about it, but now, with the Political Parties Law of 1992 in place, such activities are a "violation of laws and the National Charter," Mr. Hammad said.

Noting that most members of professional associations are also members of political parties, the minister said they could present their political views through the parties.

He reiterated the government's support for professional associations' work, "provided that such work remains restricted to the framework defined by the law. This is real democracy."

Commenting on a recent government decision banning a public meeting called for by



Salameh Hammad

the professional associations, Mr. Hammad said the decision was taken because the meeting was an extension of a public rally which the government had banned earlier.

The Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty, Mr. Hammad said, has gone through the legislative and legal procedures and received the blessings of the people.

On normalisation of relations with Israel, Mr. Hammad said, it was the right of every citizen to accept or refuse to normalise relations with the Jewish state.

The government will not force anybody to either accept or reject normalisation, he said.

However, he said, attempts by some associations to intimidate their members by threatening to

expel them from the association membership for normalising relations were not acceptable.

Health Minister Aref Bataineh supported Mr. Hammad's view, saying that associations should focus on developing their respective professions and protecting their members' rights rather than engaging in political activities.

Minister of Public Works and Housing Abdul Razzaq Ensour noted that Jordan had undergone political and social changes affecting all walks of life, including the professional associations.

He noted that the government does not draw "red lines" nor impose taboos on the participation of professional associations in political activity but seeks to streamline such work. He stressed that Jordan respects all opinions which respect rather than stifle other opinions and when they are expressed in the right form of political parties and Parliament.

Justice Minister Hisham Al Tal said it was the government's duty to ensure protection for the professional associations' meetings, provided that such meetings aim to develop the professions or protect members' rights.

However, he said, it is the right of the government to act when the professional associations' complex building is turned into a theatre for public meetings.

Baghdad resumes power supply to Kurds

BAGHDAD (R) — The Iraqi government in Baghdad has resumed supplying power to the breakaway Kurdish province of Dohuk for the first time in two years, a senior U.N. official said on Sunday.

Diplomats in Baghdad interpreted the move as an attempt to mend fences with the Kurds, now under the protection of an allied "no-fly" zone established at the end of the 1991 Gulf war.

Viktor Wahlroos, deputy U.N. coordinator in Iraq, said Dohuk, its villages and towns, were lit by electricity.

"My senior delegate for northern Iraq confirms that power has been flowing to the Dohuk province for over a week from Nineveh governorate," Mr. Wahlroos told Reuters.

"I consider this a very positive development," he said. Baghdad broke off ties with rebel Kurds in 1992 when they decided to hold free elections for a parliament and a regional government away from its authority.

Power was cut off from the province in 1993.

Mr. Wahlroos said movement of people and commodities was still restricted between government-held areas and the Kurdish region.

He did not say what prompted Baghdad to re-open Dohuk with the national grid, but he said the measure would help 750,000 Kurds in the province to lessen reliance on scarce and expensive supplies of gas and kerosene.

Other Kurdish provinces, Erbil and Sulaimaniyah, are hit by a hydroelectric power under rebel control but U.N. officials say the two provinces witness long daily blackouts.

Iraqi leaders sent an envoy to open talks with the Kurds early this year but the rebels, locked in rivalries and sporadic fighting among themselves, spurned the initiative.

One diplomat said the supply of electricity to Dohuk by the government could be a prelude to the removal of the internal embargo Baghdad placed on the Kurdish region three years ago.

"Trade in particular items is booming. For the Iraqi Kurds it is almost the only means of living," one diplomat said.

He said about 800 Turkish trucks, laden with foodstuffs, crossed Dohuk into the government-held province of Nineveh. Iraqi Kurds control most of the crossing points into Turkey.

Singapore premier leads 30,000-strong workout

SINGAPORE (R) — More than 30,000 Singaporeans, including the island-state's prime minister, took part in a mass workout Sunday, in what organisers said marked a world record for an aerobic event. The participants, who included members of Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong's cabinet and members of parliament, also took part in a 3.3-km (two mile) walk along Singapore's National Heritage Trail. The event was part of a campaign to promote a healthy lifestyle among Singaporeans.

Italy's AIDS gang have imitators

TURIN, Italy (R) — Italy's "AIDS gang", three terminally ill men who brazenly rob banks knowing they cannot be imprisoned under Italian law, have discovered to their dismay that they have imitators. Police said Saturday that a second trio of men claiming to be in the terminal stages of the illness had been arrested after a copycat robbery in the northern city of Turin.

"The AIDS gang has been successfully cloned," commented the city's daily La Stampa. Antonio Lamarca, one of the original gang, was quoted as saying that the imitators should desist.

"Ours was a provocative gesture," he said. "These guys are really putting a spasm in the works. If everyone who is terminally ill starts committing robberies it will be mayhem." The original "AIDS gang", dubbed the "three musketeers" by the Italian media, robbed banks in the Turin area unmasked, in broad daylight and without worrying about security cameras that recorded their actions inside the banks.

They were regularly detained after the robberies but then freed again because a 1993 Italian law rules out jail for those in the final stages of a terminal illness. Full-blown AIDS sufferers fall within this category although the government has promised to modify the law.

Winnie Mandela to contest divorce

JOHANNESBURG (R) — Winnie Mandela will contest a divorce action being brought by her husband South African President Nelson Mandela, a Johannesburg newspaper reported Sunday. The Sunday Independent quoted Mrs. Mandela's lawyer Moses Mavundla as saying her decision could mean that the proceedings would last more than a year.

President Mandela, 77, who has been separated from his wife since April 1992, initiated a formal divorce last week. His lawyer, Ismail Ayob, said at the time the divorce would be amicable.

The Sunday Independent said it had a letter written on behalf of Mrs. Mandela to her husband last month in which she accused him of wanting to destroy her politically. The letter said the accusation was based on statements by President Mandela to the couple's daughters. President Mandela fired his wife from her post as deputy minister for arts and culture earlier this year after she ignored instructions to cancel a foreign trip. Neither Mrs. Mandela nor her lawyers could be reached for comment.

Transvestite fools 18 would-be grooms out of dowry

TEHRAN (AFP) — An Iranian man disguised as a woman cheated 18 would-be grooms out of their money by offering to marry them, before being accidentally exposed by a child, a newspaper reported Saturday. Freydon, 26, acting as a poor unhappy woman named Zohreh, would hunt for "naive and lonely" men and lure them into proposing and setting a date for a wedding, the daily Iran said. But he would disappear after persuading the men to pay him a hefty sum for dowry costs, which he said he could not afford. Iranian customs require young women getting married to acquire some household goods to contribute to their new life.

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AMMAN (Petra) — Royal Highness Princess Basma will head the official Jordanian delegation to the non-governmental forum and meeting of the Fourth International Women's Conference in Beijing, China, capital on Sunday. At the conference, Princess Basma will deliver a speech highlighting Jordan's stand on issues discussed at the conference, including the women in the social equality between men and women on the basis of human rights, the Charter and the strategy on women.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Israel arrests anti-nuclear protesters

TEL AVIV (R) — Israeli police detained 10 anti-nuclear protesters who chained themselves to the French and Chinese embassies in Tel Aviv on Sunday, police said. Witnesses at the French embassy said police used wirecutters on the protesters' chains and took down a three-metre banner the protesters had hung which said: "Stop nuclear tests." Australia and Japan have led condemnation of China's detonation of a nuclear device on Aug. 17 and France's June announcement that it would resume nuclear tests in the South Pacific in September.

37 Filipinas return home complaining of abuse

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — Twenty-seven Filipinas complaining of abuse quit their jobs as housemaids in Kuwait and returned to the Philippines, a newspaper reported here Sunday. The maids said they ran away from their employers because of over-work, lack of proper food, non-payment of salaries and verbal abuse, according to the Arab Times. They returned home on Saturday. Most of the group wanted to change jobs and stay in the oil-rich emirate but were not allowed to do so under Kuwaiti law, the English-language newspaper said. Around 700 Filipinas have left Kuwait since June of last year.

Court to rule on 'the Emigrant' this week

CAIRO (AFP) — An Egyptian court delayed until Thursday its verdict on three law suits seeking to restore a ban on the film 'The Emigrant' on the grounds that it is offensive to religion, legal sources said Sunday. The court earlier decided to join the three cases raised by the Muslim sect of Sufis, an Islamist lawyer Mahmoud Abu Faied and a Christian lawyer Hosni Hani Abadir. The president of the Sufi sect, Sheikh Ahmad Al Qasbi, and Mr. Abu Faied demanded a ban on the film because they say it depicts the life of the Prophet Joseph, son of Jacob. Mr. Abadir calls for a ban, saying the film attacks Christianity by "altering facts depicted in the Bible." A lower court ruled on March 29 that 'The Emigrant' could be screened, overturning a ban first won by Abu Faied in December. 'The Emigrant', a French-Egyptian co-production by leading Egyptian director Youssef Shafiq, tells a story that closely resembles the tales of Joseph and his brothers and Potiphar's wife. Egyptian Islamists have turned frequently to the courts to launch action against writers, thinkers and filmmakers who they accuse of attacking Islam.

Yemen deports Swedish police, Iraqi family

SANAA (AFP) — Yemen sent back to Sweden late Saturday an Iraqi family expelled by Stockholm and their two Swedish police escorts, a government official said. The official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the Iraqi family of four and the Swedes, who have all been detained since their arrival in Sanaa on Aug. 4, had left for Stockholm via Frankfurt on a Yemeni national airline flight. The decision to return them was taken "in agreement with the Swedish authorities, given that the members of the Iraqi family do not have travel documents and have political refugee status," the official said. According to the Yemeni authorities the Iraqis did not want to be returned to Yemen, where they lived before they went to Sweden.

Kuwait, Iraq to hold talks on missing

KUWAIT CITY (AP) — Kuwaiti and Iraqi officials will meet on their border on Tuesday to discuss the fate of those captured by Iraq during its August 1990-February 1991 occupation of Kuwait, an official here said Sunday. The meeting, sponsored by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), will be held in the offices of the United Nations Kuwait Iraq Observer Mission (UNIKOM), on the Kuwaiti side of the border, he added. U.S., British and French representatives will also attend the meeting, said an official of Kuwait's committee on prisoners affairs. Duaij Al Anzi, quoted by the state-run news agency KUNA. Kuwaiti officials will seek answers on the cases of 116 prisoners or missing people, he said. Kuwaiti, Iraqi and ICRC officials discussed 43 cases at a meeting held early this month in Geneva. Kuwait accuses Iraq of having taken 605 people from Kuwait when its forces were forced out of Kuwait by the U.S.-led Operation Desert Storm. Baghdad admits having captured 73 prisoners but says it lost them afterwards during an uprising in the south of Iraq.

37 killed in week of violence in Algeria

ALGIERS (AFP) — At least 37 people have been killed in the past week in Algeria as security services crack down on armed fundamentalists who themselves were blamed for an attack on civilians in the west of the country, press reports said Sunday.

The daily Liberté reported that 12 people aged between 20 and 45 were brutally murdered a week ago by suspected Islamic militants near Chief in western Algeria.

The armed men stopped the 12 people — including an imam and a communal guard — at a roadblock and asked them to get off for an identity check before executing them.

Security services revealed later Sunday they had killed 25 armed fundamentalists over the past week in separate swoops, including four in one operation in a western suburb of Algiers.

Algeria has been hit by a spate of brutal murders of civilians in recent weeks as its three-year civil war, sparked by the banning of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) in March 1992, continues to rage unabated.

On Saturday, the daily Le Matin reported that Islamic extremists in eastern Algeria killed the wives of nine local patrolmen by slitting their throats and then decapitating some of them.

Some 371 women have been killed by Islamic fundamentalists since last year and hundreds of others kidnapped, tortured or raped, according to the Algerian security forces.

On Sunday, the Al Watan daily reported that a booby-trapped lorry blew up Saturday afternoon in Boufarik, 25 kilometres south of Algiers, destroying several homes.

Liberte also reported that a home-made bomb was found hidden in railway tracks near Chief and defused in time before a train passed.

In early August, a bomb exploded under a train travelling between Medea and Ksar Al Boukhari, in the same region, killing seven people.

Liberte and La Tribune reported on Sunday details of a huge army search operation in Kabylie, east of Algiers.

Al Watan also said that 29 people were arrested during Wednesday's army sweep in the Algiers Casbah.

They were charged with "being on the lookout, protecting the flight of terrorists after each attack and giving them shelter, food and money" as well as "seeking out potential targets." Al Watan said.

NICOSIA (Agencies) — The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) claimed Sunday that a rival Kurdish faction from Turkey has launched widespread attacks on its bases in northern Iraq, seeking to wreck a U.S.-sponsored peace pact.

The KDP said the guerrillas of the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) which is waging a bloody separatist campaign against the Turkish government, were driven off after severe fighting with "considerable casualties."

It said the PKK launched their attacks in several districts of the Kurdish self-rule enclave in northern Iraq early Saturday morning.

"There is evidence of some regional interests and instigation behind this blatant PKK attack to undermine" the

peace accord between the KDP and its main Iraqi rival, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), reached under U.S. auspices in Ireland Aug. 9-11, the KDP said in a communiqué.

The statement stressed that the assault "will not distract the KDP leadership from pursuing the peace process to end the year-long PUK-KDP conflict and restore peace and stability" to the troubled Kurdish enclave in northern Iraq.

Five KDP fighters and seven Iraqi Kurdish civilians were killed, KDP Turkey representative Safene Dizayee said. A large number of PKK guerrillas died in subsequent fighting, he said.

"The attack was well planned. Basically this is an exercise serving other people's

interests to undermine the peace process," Mr. Dizayee told Reuters.

Security sources in the southeastern Turkish city of Diyarbakir said Turkish troops near the Iraqi border were taking measures to prevent PKK members fleeing clashes with the KDP from crossing into Turkey.

The PKK have been exploiting the feud between the PUK and KDP to launch attacks on Turkey from bases inside the Kurdish enclave.

Turkey has been striving to end the internecine strife in northern Iraq in hopes that the PUK and KDP will rein in their Turkish cousins.

Ankara — like Iran and Syria, which also have Kurdish minorities, as well as Baghdad — are not happy

'Israelis drove tanks over Egyptian PoWs'

CAIRO (AFP) — Israeli soldiers crushed prisoners of war (PoWs) under tanks and mowed them down with machine gun fire, Egyptian PoWs from the 1967 war told the government daily Al-Ahram Sunday.

The interviews were the first in an Egyptian paper since reports emerged several weeks ago that Israeli soldiers killed up to 900 Arab prisoners in the 1956 Suez campaign and the June 1967 war.

Mohammad Omran, formerly a prisoner in Beersheva camp in the desert in south Israel, told the daily that he and other Egyptian prisoners were forced to lie face down on the ground with their hands tied.

An Israeli tank then drove over the line of men, Mr. Omran said, adding that the tank stopped five persons

short of him. Abdul Salam Musa said he witnessed at least one hundred prisoners killed at the Al Arish camp in the north of the Sinai desert after his artillery unit was captured.

the Israelis divided the prisoners into officers and soldiers. "As soon as the simple soldiers and drafted labourers were lined up, Israeli women soldiers came forward and opened fire on them," Mr. Musa said.

"They were having contests to see who could aim best," he said, adding that remaining prisoners were forced to bury the dead "without saying prayers over them."

Mr. Musa said this happened several times during the three day siege at Al Arish camp, "especially with officers and soldiers from the

Saiqa," Egypt's elite commando.

Ismael Ibrahim said most Egyptian prisoners ended up at Adit prison, north of Haifa in Israel.

Officials there told prisoners one day that Israeli soldiers had entered Cairo. When the prisoners "rose up calling the story a lie," soldiers opened fire on them, Mr. Ibrahim said.

"The rest they put into refrigerated cells for 10 days," Ibrahim said.

All three ex-prisoners said they reported the atrocities in Israeli camps to Egyptian officials after returning to Cairo but their reports were ignored.

President Hosni Mubarak has said the Egyptian government knew nothing of massacres against its soldiers until the recent reports from

Israel. He called on Israel to bring the authors of the atrocities to trial.

Israeli historian Aryeh Yitzhaki revealed a week ago the massacres of hundreds of Egyptians as they surrendered to Israeli forces during the 1967 war.

On Friday, Mr. Yitzhaki also urged Mr. Mubarak to investigate the execution of more than 80 Israeli prisoners in Egyptian camps during the 1973 Middle East war.

The historian said Israel had kept quiet about the massacres so as not to damage relations with Egypt. The two countries signed a peace treaty in 1979.

The publication of accounts of massacres by Israeli soldiers in the 1956 Suez campaign and the June 1967 war has caused dismay and official embarrassment in the Jewish state.

Shel kill a Bosnia end to

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